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KING SOLOMON'S MINES

BY
SIR H. RIDER HAGGARD

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NOTE

I have thought that the best plan would be to tell my story in a plain straight way.

I ask pardon for my rough way of writing. I can only say that I am more accustomed to using a gun than a pen.

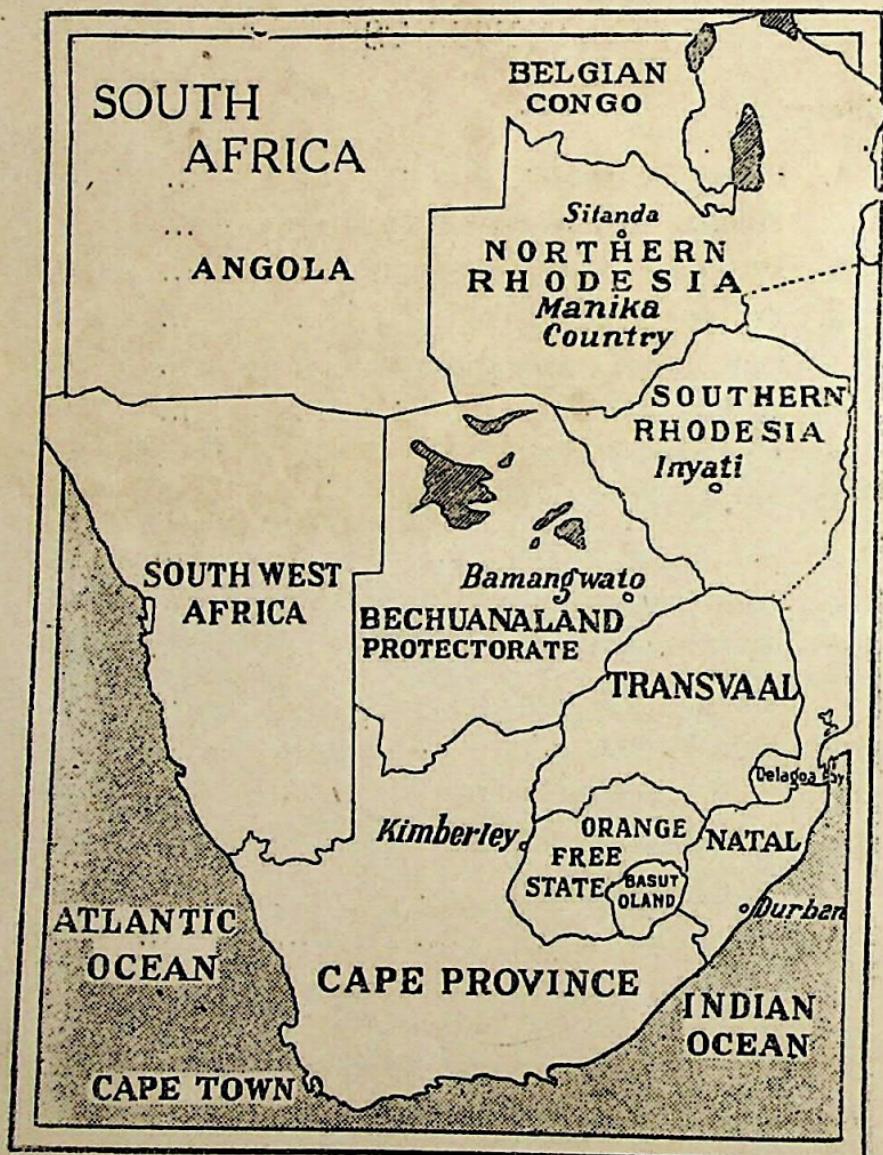
There is a Kukuana saying, "A sharp spear needs no polish." In the same way I hope that a true story, however strange it may be, does not require to be dressed up in fine words.

Allan Luterman

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KING SOLOMON'S MINES

CHAPTER 1

I MEET SIR HENRY CURTIS

IT is a curious thing that at my age—fifty-five last birthday—I should find myself taking up a pen to write a history. I wonder what sort of a history it will be when I have finished it. I have done a good many things in my life, which seems a long one to me—perhaps because I began work so young. At an age when other boys are at school, I was working for my living as a trader in Africa. I have been trading, hunting, fighting, or working at the mines ever since. And yet it is only eight months ago that I made a lot of money. It is a lot of money—I don't yet know how much; but I do not think that I would go through the last fifteen or sixteen months again for it, no, not even if I knew that I should come out safe at the end.

Now to begin. I, Allan Quatermain, of Durban, Natal, Gentleman, promise to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

It is eighteen months ago since first I met Sir Henry Curtis and Captain Good. After spending a week at Cape Town, I determined to go back to Natal by ship. Among the persons who came on

wboard ere two who interested me. One, a gentleman of about thirty, was the largest and strongest looking man I ever saw. He had yellow hair, a thick yellow beard, a clear-cut face, and large grey eyes set deep in his head. I never saw a finer looking man. His face seemed to me familiar: it made me think of someone I had seen before: but at the time I could not remember who it was. The big man's name was Sir Henry Curtis.

The other man who stood talking to Sir Henry was short and dark and of quite a different cut. I imagined that he was an officer on a ship. I was right, for I learnt that he was an officer who had just left the King's employment after seventeen years' service at sea. His name, I found out, was Good—Captain John Good. He was broad, of the usual height, had dark hair, and was rather a curious man to look at. He was so very much in order, so smooth, so clean, so polished; and he always wore an **eye-glass** in his right eye: it seemed to grow there, for it had no string, and he never took it out except to clean it. At first I thought that he used to sleep with it, but afterwards I found that this was a mistake. He put it in his pocket, when he went to bed, together with his teeth. (For he had lost his real teeth and he had a very fine **set of teeth** made to take their place.)

Captain Good and I went down to dinner together, and there we found Sir Henry Curtis already seated. The Captain and I soon fell into talk about shooting and such things; after some time he began to talk about elephants.

"Ah, Sir," called out somebody who was sitting

near me, "you've reached the right man for that; 'Hunter' Quatermain should be able to tell you about elephants if anybody can."

Sir Henry, who had been sitting quite quiet listening to our talk, showed signs of surprise.

"Pardon me, sir," he said leaning forward across the table and speaking in a low deep voice, "Pardon me, sir, but is your name Allan Quatermain?"

I said that it was.

The big man said nothing more; but I heard him murmur "fortunate" into his beard.

Dinner came to an end. As we were leaving the dinner-table, Sir Henry approached me and asked if I would come into his room to smoke a pipe. I accepted; so we three sat down and lit our pipes.

"Mr. Quatermain," said Sir Henry Curtis, "the year before last, about this time, you were, I believe, at a place called Bamangwato to the north of the Transvaal."

"I was," I answered, rather surprised that he should know my movements so well.

"You were trading there, were you not?" put in Captain Good in his quick way.

"I was. I took up a wagon-load of goods and made a camp outside the place, and stopped until I had sold them."

Sir Henry was sitting opposite to me, his arms leaning on the table. He now looked up, fixing his large grey eyes full upon my face. There was a curiously anxious look in them, I thought.

"Did you happen to meet a man called Neville there?"

"Oh, yes; he stopped just beside me for a couple of weeks to rest his cattle before going on. I had a letter a few months ago, asking me if I knew what had happened to him. I answered it as well as I could at the time."

"Yes," said Sir Henry, "your letter was sent on to me. You said in it that the gentleman called Neville left Bamangwato at the beginning of May in a wagon with a driver and a native hunter called Jim, with the intention of going to Inyati,¹ the last trading place. There he meant to sell his wagon and proceed on foot. You also said that he did sell his wagon; for six months afterwards, you saw the wagon in the possession of a Portuguese² trader. This trader told you that he had bought it at Inyati from a white man whose name he had forgotten, and that he believed the white man with the native servant had started off on a shooting trip."

"Yes."

Then came a pause.

"Mr. Quatermain," said Sir Henry suddenly, "I suppose you know, or can guess, nothing more of the reason of my—of Mr. Neville's journey to the northward, or as to what point that journey was directed."

"I heard something," I answered, and stopped. The subject was one about which I did not wish to speak.

Sir Henry and Captain Good looked at each other, and Captain Good nodded.

"Mr. Quatermain," went on the former, "I am going to tell you a story, and ask your advice, and

¹ See map.

² The people of Portugal are called the "*Portuguese*."

perhaps your help. The gentleman who sent me your letter told me that I might place perfect faith in it, as you were well known and respected by all in Natal."

I bowed—and Sir Henry went on.

"Mr. Neville was my brother."

"Oh," I said, for now I knew of whom Sir Henry had made me think when I first saw him.

"He was," went on Sir Henry, "my only and younger brother, and till five years ago I do not think we were ever a month away from each other. But just about five years ago we quarrelled, and I behaved unjustly to my brother in my anger."

Here Captain Good nodded his head.

"It so happened that just at the time when we quarrelled, our father died and all his money came to me, as the eldest son. My brother was left without a penny. Of course it was my duty to provide for him, and my father would have wished me to do so. But at that time, because of the quarrel between us, I did not offer to do anything. To my shame I say it. I waited for him to ask me: and he did not. I am sorry to trouble you with all this, Mr. Quatermain, but I must make things clear—eh, Good?"

"Quite so, quite so," said the Captain. "Mr. Quatermain will, I am sure, keep this history to himself."

"Of course," said I.

"Well," went on Sir Henry, "my brother had a few hundred pounds. Without saying a word to me, he took this money and, using the name Neville, he started off for South Africa in the wild hope of gaining riches there. This I learnt

afterwards. Some three years passed, and I heard nothing of my brother though I wrote several times. No doubt the letters never reached him. But, as time went on, I became more and more troubled about him. I began to make inquiries, and your letter was one of the results. At last I made up my mind to come and look for him myself, and Captain Good was so kind as to come with me."

"Yes," said the Captain; "I had nothing else to do. And now perhaps, sir, you will tell us what you know or have heard about the gentleman called Neville."

CHAPTER 2

I SPEAK OF KING SOLOMON'S MINES

"WHAT was it you heard about my brother's journey at Bamangwato?" said Sir Henry, as I paused to fill my pipe before answering Captain Good.

"I heard this," I answered, "and I have never spoken of it to anybody till to-day. I heard that he was starting for Solomon's mines."

"Solomon's mines!" cried both my hearers at once. "Where are they?"

"I don't know," I said. "I know where they are said to be. Once I saw the tops of the mountains that border them, but there were a hundred and thirty miles of desert between me and them, and I do not know that any white man ever got across it—except one. Perhaps the best thing

I can do is to tell you the story of Solomon's mines as I know it. But you must promise me that you will keep secret everything that I tell you. Do you agree to do so? I have my reasons for asking it."

Sir Henry nodded, and Captain Good replied, "Certainly, certainly."

"Here and there," I began "you meet a man who takes the trouble to collect the old stories of the natives. It was such a man who first told me of King Solomon's mines. His name was Evans."

"Did you ever hear of the Suliman Mountains?" said Evans. 'Well, that's where King Solomon had his diamond mines. An old witch up in the Manica country told me about it. She said that the people who lived across those mountains were a branch of the Zulu people speaking a language rather like the Zulu language, but they were finer and bigger men even than the Zulus. She said that there lived among them great wizards, and that these wizards had the secret of a wonderful mine of "bright stones."' This was Evans' story.

"Well, I laughed at the story at the time and thought no more of the matter. But, twenty years later, I heard something more about the Suliman Mountains and the country which lies behind them. I was up at a place called Sitanda's Kraal,¹ when one day a Portuguese gentleman arrived with a single companion, a 'half-and-half' (half-native, half white). He seemed to be a fellow of good birth, tall and thin with large dark eyes. He told me that his name was José Silvestre.

¹ *Kraal* means "village." See map.

When he started out next day he said, 'Good-bye,' taking off his hat quite in the manner of the old nobles of Portugal. 'Good-bye sir,' he said; 'if ever we meet again, I shall be the richest man in the world, and I will remember you.'

"I watched him set out towards the great desert to the west, wondering if he was mad, and what he thought he was going to find there.

"A week passed. One evening I was sitting on the ground in front of my little tent and gazing at the red-hot sun sinking down over the desert. Suddenly I saw a figure on the slope of the rising ground opposite to me, about three hundred yards away. It seemed to be a European, for it wore a coat. The figure crept along on its hands and knees; then it got up and ran forward a few yards on its legs, only to fall and creep again. I sent one of my native hunters to help him, and after a time he arrived. And who do you suppose it was?"

"José Silvestre, of course," said Captain Good.

"Yes, José Silvestre—or rather his bones and a little skin. His face was bright yellow with disease, and his large dark eyes stood nearly out of his head. There was nothing but yellow skin and the bones holding it up beneath.

"Water! in God's name, water!" he moaned, and I saw that his lips were cracked and his tongue was black.

"I gave him water with a little milk in it, two large glasses of it. He seized it and drank it fiercely without stopping. I would not let him have any more then for fear it might harm him. Then his illness took hold of him again. He fell down

and began to talk wildly about Suliman's Mountains, and the diamonds, and the desert. I carried him into the tent, and did what I could for him—which was little enough. About eleven o'clock he grew quieter, and I lay down for a little rest and went to sleep. At dawn I woke again, and in the half light I saw Silvestre, a strange, terrible form, sitting up and gazing out towards the desert. The first beam of sunlight shot right across the wide plain before us till it reached the far-away top of one of the tallest of the Suliman Mountains more than a hundred miles away.

"There it is!" cried the dying man, pointing with his long thin arm, "but I shall never reach it, never. No one will ever reach it!"

"Suddenly he paused. 'Friend,' he said, turning towards me, 'are you there? My eyes grow dark.'

"Yes,' I said. 'Yes; lie down and rest.'

"I shall rest soon,' he answered; 'and then I shall rest for ever. Listen, I am dying. You have been good to me. I will give you the writing. Perhaps you will get there if you can live to pass the desert which has killed my poor servant and me.'

"He felt about inside his shirt and brought out a little bag made of deer-skin. It was fastened with a short leather string: he tried to loosen this, but could not. He handed it to me. 'Untie it,' he said. I did so, and took from it a bit of torn yellow cloth on which something was written in red-brown letters. Inside this cloth was a paper.

"Then he went on faintly, for he was growing weak; 'The paper gives all that is written on the

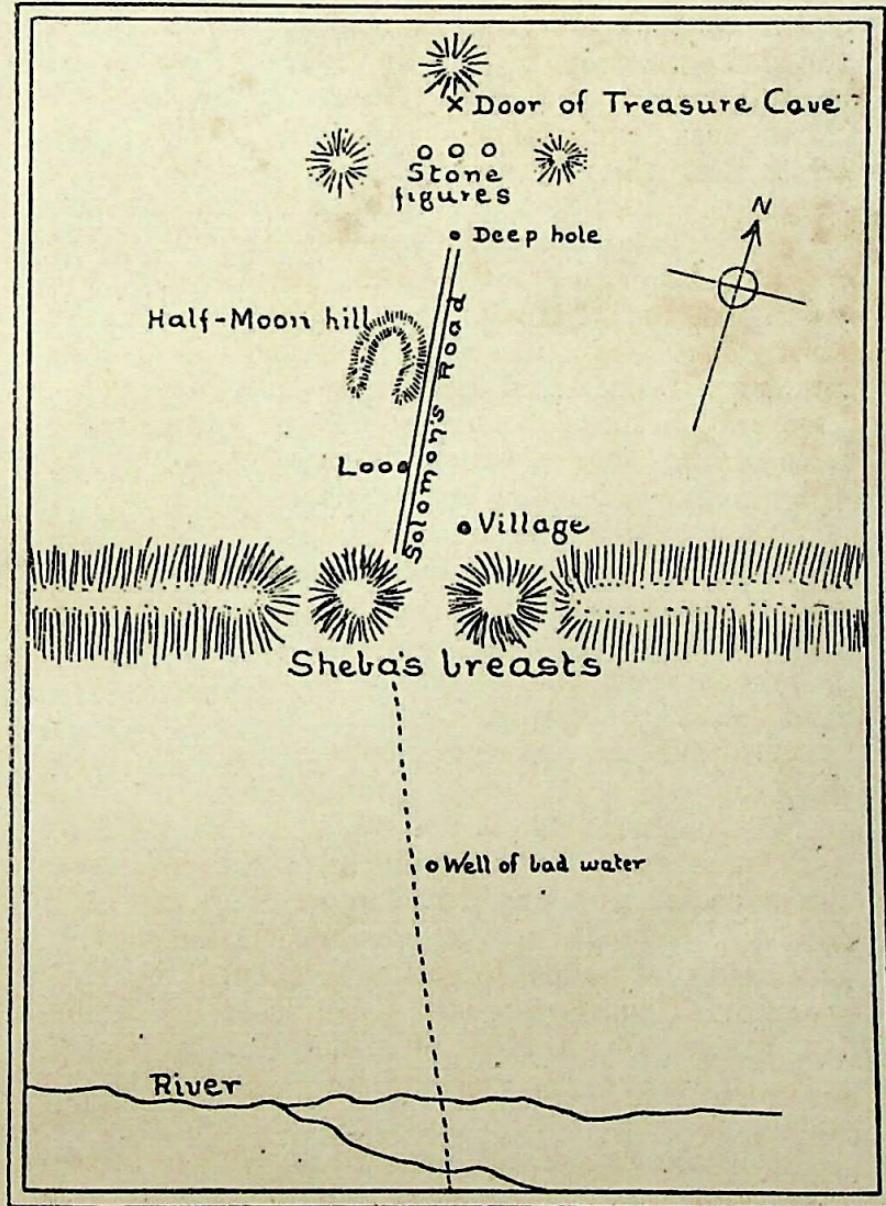
cloth. It took me years to read it. Listen : I am the descendant of a José da Silvestre who lived three-hundred years ago. He was one of the first Portuguese who landed on these shores. He wrote that when he was dying on those mountains which no white foot ever pressed before or since. His slave, who waited for him on this side of the mountains, found him dead and brought the writing home to Delagoa. It has been in the family ever since, but none have cared to read it, till at last I did. And I have lost my life over it. But another may succeed and become the richest man in the world—the richest man in the world. Only give it to no one; go yourself!"

"Then his mind began to wander again, and in an hour it was all over. He was dead—God rest him; he died very quietly. I made a deep grave for him and put two big stones on his breast. So I do not think that dogs can have got at him. And then I came away."

"Yes, but the paper?" said Sir Henry with deep interest.

"Well, gentlemen, if you wish, I will tell you. I never showed it to anyone except to a Portuguese trader who had drunk more than was good for him. He told me the meaning of the writing, but I am sure he had forgotten all about it by next morning. The Portuguese paper is at my home, but I have the English of it here in my pocket, and a drawing of the map. Here it is.

"I am José da Silvestre. I am dying of hunger in a little cave on the north side of the mountain which I have called Sheba's Breasts. The cave is



in the southern of the two mountains. I write this in the year 1590. My pen is a piece of bone ; my paper is a piece of cloth torn out of my shirt, and I write with my own blood. If my slave finds this when he comes, he will bring it to Delagoa, to my friend, . . . (The name cannot be read.) My friend should tell the King of this matter so that he may send an army. If the army can live through the desert and conquer the people, the Kukuanas, he will become the richest king on earth. Holy men should be brought with the army, for the Kukuanas know the arts of devils. With my own eyes I have seen millions of diamonds stored in Solomon's Treasure-Room behind the White Death. But Gagool, the witch-finder, deceived me, and I brought nothing away, scarcely my life. Let him who comes follow the map and climb the snow of Sheba's left breast till he reaches the top. On the north side of that lies the great road which Solomon made. From there it is three days journey to the King's palace. Let him kill Gagool. Pray for my soul. Farewell.

“ ‘ Josè da Silvestre.’ ”

I finished the reading and showed my drawing from the map which the dying man had made with his blood. Then there followed a silence.

“ Well,” said Captain Good, “ I have been round the world twice and put in at most ports, but may I be hanged if I ever heard a tale like this, except in a story-book—nor a story-book either.”

“ It is a strange tale, Mr. Quatermain,” said Sir Henry. “ I suppose that it is true ?”

"If you think that it is not true, Sir Henry," I answered, rather displeased, "why, there is an end of the matter." I put the paper in my pocket and rose to go.

Sir Henry laid his large hand upon my shoulder. "Sit down, Mr. Quatermain," he said. "I beg your pardon; I see very well that you did not wish to deceive us; but the story sounded so strange that I could hardly believe it."

"You shall see José da Silvestre's own map and writing when we reach Durban," I answered, for really, when I came to consider the question, it was scarcely wonderful that he should doubt my truthfulness. "But I have not told you about your brother. I knew the man Jim who was with him. He was a native from Bechuana-land, a good hunter and an unusually clever man. That morning on which Mr. Neville was starting, I saw Jim standing by my wagon.

"'Jim,' said I, 'where are you off to on this trip? Is it elephants?'

"'No, Baas,'¹ he answered, 'we are going to get something worth more than elephants.'

"'And what might that be?' I said, for I was interested. 'Is it gold?'

"'No, Baas, something worth more than gold,' and he laughed.

"I asked no more questions, for I did not wish to seem too inquiring, but I did not know what to think. After a short time Jim said, 'Baas'. I took no notice. 'Baas,' he said again.

¹"Baas" means "Sir."

'Eh, boy, what is it?' 'Baas, we are going after diamonds.'

"'Diamonds,' said I. 'Then you are going in the wrong direction: you should go to the diamond fields at Kimberley.'

"'Baas, have you ever heard of Solomon's Mountains?'

"'I have heard a foolish story, Jim.'

"'It's no story. I once knew a woman who came from there, and reached Natal with her child: she told me. She is dead now.'

"'Your master's body will feed the birds, Jim, if he tries to reach Suliman's country; and so will you, if they can get any pickings off your good-for-nothing old bones.'

"He laughed. 'Perhaps, Baas. Man must die. I'd rather like to try a new country myself.'

"'Ah, my boy,' I said, 'you wait till the pale old man, Death, gets hold of your yellow throat, and then we shall hear what sort of a song you sing.'

"Half an hour after that I saw Neville's wagon move off. Jim came running back. 'Good-bye, Baas,' he said. 'I didn't like to start without bidding you good-bye; for I dare say you are right and that we shall never come south again.'

"'Is your master really going to the Suliman Mountains, Jim?'

"'Yes,' he answered; 'he means to try to find the diamonds.'

"'Oh!' I said. 'Will you take a note to your master, and promise not to give it to him until you reach Inyati—which is a hundred miles from here?'

"Yes, Baas."

"So I took a piece of paper and wrote on it,
*'Let him climb the snow of Sheba's left breast until
 he reaches the top; on the north side of that is
 Solomon's great road.'*

"And that," I said, turning to Sir Henry, "is all I know about your brother; but I am much afraid—"

"Mr. Quatermain," said Sir Henry, "I am going to look for my brother till I find him, or until I know that he is dead. Will you come with me? If by chance we find diamonds, they shall belong to you and Good equally: I do not want them. You may make your own terms with me, Mr. Quatermain; and, of course, I shall pay all the cost."

I rose. I went to the side of the ship and knocked out my pipe. I wanted a few moments to make up my mind. I watched the little piece of burning matter fall, like a red star, into the sea below. Then I went back into the room.

"Yes, gentlemen," I said, sitting down again, "I will go. I tell you plainly that I do not think we shall come out of it alive—that is, if we attempt to cross the Suliman Mountains. What was the fate of the old José da Silvestre three hundred years ago? What was the fate of his descendant twenty years ago? What has been your brother's fate? I tell you plainly, gentlemen, that as their fates were, so I believe ours will be."

Sir Henry's face did not change. "We must take our chance," he said. "If we are to be knocked on the head, all I have to say is, that I hope we get a little shooting first, eh, Good?"

"Yes, yes," replied the Captain. "We have all three of us been accustomed to face danger and to hold our lives in our hands in various ways, so it is no good turning back now."

CHAPTER 3

UMBOPA ENTERS OUR SERVICE

WHEN we reached Durban, Sir Henry and Captain Good came and stayed at my house there. There are only three rooms and a kitchen in it, and it is made of green brick with an iron roof; but there is a good garden.

I then bought a wagon and a fine set of twenty Zulu cattle. As to weapons, Sir Henry had brought a large number of guns and pistols with him from England, and I had a good store also. We took ten guns and three pistols.

We decided to take five servants—a driver, a leader, and three others. I found the driver and the leader without much difficulty, two Zulus named Goza and Tom; but to get the three other servants proved a more difficult matter. It was necessary that they should be thoroughly trustworthy and brave men, as in a business of this sort our lives might depend on them. At last I secured two—Ventvogel, an excellent hunter, and Khiva, a young Zulu who knew some English.

Having secured these four men, I looked for the fifth to suit my purpose, but without success. So we determined to depart without one.

It was the evening before our start. We had done dinner and were still at the table, when Khiva came and told me that a Zulu, named Umbopa, was

waiting to see me. I told Khiva to bring him in. A tall fine-looking man entered, about thirty years old, and very light coloured for a Zulu. He lifted his stick by way of a greeting, sat down on the floor in the corner and remained silent. I observed that he was a Keshla, or "ringed man," that is, he wore on his head a black ring made of a sort of wax polished with fat and worked up in the hair. This ring is usually worn by Zulus when they reach a certain age or rank. Also it seemed to me that his face was familiar.

"Well," I said at last, "what is your name?"

"Umbopa," answered the man in a slow, deep voice.

"I have seen your face before."

"Yes; the chief saw my face at the place of the Little Hand on the day before the battle."

Then I remembered. I was one of Lord Chelmsford's guides in that unfortunate Zulu war, and took part in a battle, in which I had the good fortune not to be killed. On the day before the battle I was talking to this man, who had command of some friendly natives. He told me that he had doubts of the safety of the camp. I told him to be silent and to leave such things to wiser heads; but afterwards I thought of his words.

"I remember," I said; "what is it you want?"

"I hear that you go a great journey far into the north with the white chiefs from over the water. Is it a true word?"

"It is."

"I hear that you go a moon's journey beyond the Manica country. If indeed you travel so far, I would travel with you. I want no money, but

I am a brave man and worth my place and meat.
... I have spoken."

In some way this man was different from other Zulus, and I did not quite trust his offer to come without pay. I told Sir Henry and Good what he had said, and asked them their opinion.

Sir Henry told me to ask him to stand up. Umbopa did so, at the same time slipping off the long coat which he wore, and showing himself naked except for the cloth round his centre and a string of lion's teeth round his neck. Certainly he was a very fine-looking man. I never saw a finer native. Standing about six feet three inches high, he was broad also and well shaped. In that light his skin did not seem dark, except here and there, where deep black lines marked old spear wounds. Sir Henry walked up to him and looked into his proud, fine face.

"They make a good pair, don't they?" said Good; "one as big as the other."

"I like your looks, Mr. Umbopa, and I will take you as my servant," said Sir Henry in English.

Umbopa seemed to understand him, for he answered in Zulu, "It is well." And then he added, with a look at the white man's great height and strength, "We are men, thou and I."

CHAPTER 4

SITANDA'S KRAAL

Now I do not intend to describe at full length all the events of our long travel up to Sitanda's Kraal, a journey of more than three thousand miles from

Durban. We had to go the last three hundred miles on foot because of the frequent presence of the *tsetse* fly, whose bite is death to all animals except man and asses.

We left Durban at the end of January, and it was in the second week of May that we camped near Sitanda's Kraal.

At Inyati only twelve cattle remained out of the twenty which I had bought in Durban. We left the wagon and the cattle at Inyati in charge of Goza and Tom, our driver and leader, both of them trustworthy boys. Then with Umbopa, Khiva, Ventvogel and half a dozen men whom we hired on the spot to carry our things, we started out on foot upon our wild journey from there to Sitanda's Kraal.

I remember we were all rather silent on this occasion, and I think each of us was wondering if we should ever see our wagon again: for myself I never expected to do so. For a time we marched on in silence. Then Umbopa, who was marching in front, broke into a Zulu song; the song was about some brave men, who were tired of life and the quietness of things, and started off into a great desert to find new things, or die; and how, when they had travelled far into the desert, they found that it was not a desert at all, but a beautiful place full of young wives and fair cattle, of beasts to hunt and enemies to kill.

Then we all laughed. Umbopa was a cheerful fellow.

We had some good shooting on the way and killed nine elephants. One of the elephants pursued Good, and he was only saved from death

by the brave deed of the little Zulu, Khiva. Good fell in front of the elephant, and we thought for the moment that his end was certain. But Khiva turned and cast his spear straight in the elephant's face. It struck his trunk. With a cry of pain the beast seized the poor Zulu, and, placing a foot on his body, tore him in two! We rushed up and fired again and again, until the elephant fell.

Good rose from the ground. He was terribly grieved for the brave man who had given his life to save him. Umbopa stood gazing at the huge dead elephant and the remains of poor Khiva.

"Ah, well," he said at last, "he is dead; but he died like a man."

We marched on again, and at last we reached Sitanda's Kraal. Very well do I remember how we arrived at that place. To the right was a scattered native village with a few stone houses for cattle, and some fields of grain down by the water. Beyond that stretched the great *veldt* (wild grass land). To the left lay the desert.

Just below our camp flowed a little stream. On the farther side of it was a stony slope. Down that slope twenty years before I had seen poor Silvestre creeping back after his attempt to reach Solomon's mines. Beyond that slope begins the waterless desert.

It was evening. The great ball of the sun was sinking into the desert, sending wonderful beams of many coloured light all over the huge plain. I left Good to see to the arrangements of our little camp, and took Sir Henry with me. We walked to the top of the slope opposite, and gazed across the desert. The air was very clear, and far far

away I could spy the faint blue form of the Suliman Mountains.

"There," I said, "there is the wall round Solomon's mines, but God knows if we shall ever climb it."

"My brother should be there, and, if he is, I shall reach him somehow," said Sir Henry in a voice of calm certainty.

"I hope so," I answered, and turned to go back to the camp. Then I saw that we were not alone. Behind us, also gazing at the far-off mountains, stood Umbopa.

"Is that the land to which you would journey?" he said, pointing towards the mountains with his broad spear.

"Yes, Umbopa," answered Sir Henry, "I would journey there."

"The desert is wide and there is no water in it; the mountains are high and covered with snow. And man cannot say what lies behind them in the place where the sun sets. It is a far journey."

"Yes," answered Sir Henry, "it is far: I go to seek my brother. And there is no journey upon this earth that a man may not make if he sets his heart on it. There are no mountains he may not climb, no desert he cannot cross if love leads him and he holds his life in his hand, counting it as nothing, ready to keep it or lose it, as Heaven may order."

"Great words, my father," answered Umbopa. "Perhaps I seek a brother over the mountains?"

I looked at him. "What do you mean? What do you know of those mountains?"?

"A little; a very little. There is a strange land

yonder, a land of witches and beautiful things; a land of brave people, and of trees, and streams, and snow-mountains, and a great white road. I have heard of it. Those who live to see, will see."

CHAPTER 5

OUR MARCH INTO THE DESERT

NEXT day we made our arrangements for starting. Of course it was impossible for us to take all our things across the desert; so we made an arrangement with an old native, who had a hut close by, to take care of some of them till we returned.

We took with us five guns, three pistols, five water-bottles, twenty-five pounds of sun-dried meat, our knives, a compass, some matches and a few other articles.

By promising them a good hunting-knife each, I got three natives from the village to come with us for the first twenty miles, each carrying a large pot of water. My aim in this was to fill up our water-bottles again after the first night's march.

We determined to start in the cool of the evening. All day we rested and slept. At sunset we ate a good meal of meat washed down with tea—the last tea we would drink for many a long day. Then having made our final arrangements, we lay down and waited for the moon to rise. At last, about nine o'clock, up she came in all her glory pouring her light over the wild country, and throwing a silver glimmer on the rolling desert before us. We rose up and in a few minutes were ready. We three stood by ourselves. Uimbopa,

spear in hand and a gun across his shoulders, stood a few yards in front of us gazing across the desert. The hired natives with the pots of water and Ventvogel were gathered in a little knot behind.

"Gentlemen," said Sir Henry in his deep voice, "we are going on as strange a journey as men can make in this world. Before we start, let us for a moment pray to the God who shapes the fates of men that He may direct our steps according to His will."

Taking off his hat he covered his face with his hand for a minute or so. Good and I did the same.

"And now," said Sir Henry, "march!"

We had nothing to guide us except the distant mountains and old José da Silvestre's map. If we failed to find the "Well of bad water" which his map showed in the middle of the desert, we should probably die of thirst. And it seemed to me that our hopes of finding it in that great sea of sand were very small indeed. Even suppose that Silvestre had marked the well correctly, yet it might have been dried up by the sun years ago, or filled with sand.

On we marched silently as shadows through the night and in the heavy sand. It was very quiet and we felt very much alone there in the desert. Good felt this and began to whistle a cheerful song, but it sounded foolish in that huge place, and he stopped.

At last the eastern sky became faintly red like the cheek of a girl. Then came faint lines of yellow light, that changed to golden bars; and dawn crept out across the desert.

About an hour later we spied some rocks rising out of the plain, and to these we dragged ourselves. A large rock hanging out from the others gave a very pleasant shelter from the heat. Underneath this we crept. We drank some water and ate a piece of sun-dried meat: then we lay down and were soon sunk in a deep sleep.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon before we woke. We found the native water-carriers preparing to return: they had seen enough of the desert already, and no number of knives or other gifts would have made them come a step farther. So we each took a big drink, filled up our water-bottles and then watched them depart on their twenty miles' march home.

At half-past four we also started. Not a living thing was to be seen on all the great plain. One creature we found—and that in great numbers—the common fly. The flies came upon us not singly but in armies.

At sunset we stopped and waited for the moon to rise; then we marched on through the night until the sun appeared. We drank a little, then lay down on the sand to sleep. There was no shelter. At seven in the morning we woke up feeling like a piece of meat being baked on the fire. I do not know how we lived through the day. At about three in the afternoon we decided that we could bear it no longer, and we began to move forward again.

At sunset we rested and got some sleep. When the moon rose, we marched on again. We were suffering terribly from thirst. We had not the strength left in us to speak.

At two o'clock we stopped near a little hill. Driven to it by our dreadful thirst, we drank our last drops of water. Then we lay down.

Just as I was dropping off to sleep, I heard Umbopa say to himself, "If we cannot find water, we shall all be dead before the moon rises to-morrow."

CHAPTER 6

WATER! WATER!

In two hours' time I woke up. I could sleep no more. I had been dreaming that I was bathing in a running stream. I awoke to find myself in this dry desert, and to remember that, if we did not find water this day, we must die.

The others awoke. We began to talk about the matter. Things seemed serious enough.

"If we do not find water, we shall die," said Sir Henry.

"If we can trust Silvestre's map, there should be some near here," I said. No one seemed interested in this: it was so clear that no great faith could be put upon the map.

It was growing light. I saw Ventvogel rise and begin to walk about. Then he lifted his nose and seemed to smell the air.

"I smell water," he said.

Just then the sun came up in glory. There, not more than fifty miles away, we saw Sheba's Breasts, and stretching away for hundreds of miles on each side of them was the great Suliman Range.

"You are a fool!" I said to Ventvogel.
"There is no water."

"I smell it, Baas," he answered.

Sir Henry stroked his yellow beard thoughtfully. "Perhaps it is on the top of the hill," he said.

Hopelessly enough we climbed up the sandy sides of the little hill—and sure enough, there, in a deep cut, was water!

We filled ourselves and our water-bottles, and started off at once as soon as the moon rose.

Our water was again finished when we reached the foot of the mountain. By good fortune we found some fruit growing in a hollow some way up the mountain side.

As we climbed higher up the mountain, we suffered terribly during the nights from cold.

We had little strength left. Our food was gone.

It was May 23rd. We struggled slowly up the slope of snow, lying down from time to time to rest. At sunset we found ourselves just below Sheba's left breast.

"I say," said Good in a faint voice, "we ought to be somewhere near the cave that the old gentleman wrote about."

"Yes," said I, "if there is a cave. And if we don't find it before dark, we are dead men."

We marched on in silence. Then Umbopa caught me by the arm.

"Look!" he said.

I saw what seemed to be a hole in the snow.

"It is the cave," said Umbopa.

We hurried to the spot, and found that the hole was the mouth of the cave. We were none too

soon, for just as we reached shelter, the sun went down.

We crept into the cave, and lay close together so as to be warmer. We could not sleep; the cold was too terrible. We sat hour after hour, and the frost bit us through and through.

Not very long before dawn I heard Ventvogel give a deep breath. Then there was silence. His back was resting against mine, and it seemed to grow colder and colder, till it felt like ice.

At last the air began to grow grey with light. The sun looked in upon our half-frozen forms—and also upon Ventvogel sitting there among us, dead.

We drew away from the body and left it sitting there, its arms clasped about its knees.

Suddenly I heard a cry of fear from someone, and turned my head.

And this is what I saw. Sitting at the end of the cave was another form; the head rested on its breast, and the long arms hung down.

I drew near and looked.

The body was that of a tall man with a rather large nose, hair grey in places, and a black beard. The skin was perfectly yellow and stretched tight over the bones. The body was frozen quite-stiff.

"Who can it be?" said I.

"Can't you guess?" asked Good. "Why, José da Silvestre, of course."

"Impossible!" I cried. "He died three hundred years ago.

"Why not? What is there to prevent him from lasting for three thousand years, frozen hard as he is? Look, here is the 'piece of bone' with which he drew the map."

"Yes," said Sir Henry, "and here is the place from which he got the blood to draw it with," and he pointed to a small wound on the left arm of the body.

We left those two, the proud Silvestre and poor little Ventvogel, to keep their unending watch in the midst of the snows. We crept out of the cave into the sunshine; and we wondered how many hours it would be before we were even as they are.

CHAPTER 7

SOLOMON'S ROAD

WE walked to the edge of the mountains. The mist had cleared a little. Below us, at the end of a long slope of snow, we saw some green grass, through which a stream was running. By the stream stood a group of large deer. The sight filled us with joy. There was food in plenty if we could only get it.

We took our guns and aimed very carefully, as indeed a man would aim, knowing that his life depended on the shot. We fired. As the smoke cleared away we saw—oh, joy!—a great animal lying on its back. We gave a shout of victory: we were saved: we should not die for want of food.

Weak as we were, we rushed down the slope of snow, and, in ten minutes from the time of shooting, we were eating the uncooked meat.

As we ate, our life and strength seemed to come back to us. We began to look about us. Some five thousand feet below us lay miles on miles of the

most beautiful country I have ever seen. Here was a thick forest, and there a great river went on its silvery way. To the left lay rich pasture-land on which we could see numberless cattle. To the right were hills, with fields of grain between them.

We sat and gazed in silence at this wonderful view. Then Sir Henry spoke.

"Isn't there something on the map about Solomon's great road?" he said.

I nodded, my eyes still gazing over the far country.

"Well, look, there it is!" and he pointed a little to our right.

Good and I looked, and we saw a splendid road cut out of the rock, at least fifty feet wide, and kept in good order.

"Well," said Good, "it must be quite near us if we turn off to the right. Hadn't we better be making a start?"

We made our way down to the road and marched along it. At one place the road was carried over a beautifully built bridge. At another place its way was cut through a hill, and on the rocks at the sides strange figures were drawn, men in armour driving battle-cars, a battle, and a group of prisoners.

At midday we came to a wood and a small stream. We had a meal; then we lit our pipes and sat in silence. After some time I noticed that Good was not there. I looked to see where he was. Soon I observed him sitting by the bank of the stream in which he had been bathing. He had on nothing but his shirt. He was brushing his clothes, shaking his head sadly at the many holes and torn places. Then he polished his shoes. He then began to

brush his hair very carefully. Suddenly I saw a flash of light that passed by his head.

Good sprang up with a curse: and so did I. Standing not more than twenty yards away were a group of men. They were very tall. Their skin was a dark golden colour. Some of them wore black feathers on their heads and had short coats of skins. In front of them stood a youth of about seventeen. His hand was still raised: it was he who had thrown the spear. As I looked, an old soldier-like man stepped forward, and caught the youth by the arm, and said something to him. Then they advanced upon us.

Sir Henry and Good seized their guns. The party of natives still came on: it seemed to me that they did not know what guns were.

"Put down your guns!" I shouted to the others. Walking forward I addressed the man who had spoken to the spear-thrower.

"Greeting," I said in Zulu, not knowing what language to use. To my surprise I was understood.

"Greeting," answered the man, speaking in Zulu, but in an ancient form of the language. "Where have you come from? Why are the faces of three of you white, and the face of the fourth is as the face of our mothers' sons?" At this he pointed to Umbopa. I saw that the face of Umbopa was like the faces of the men before me, and so also was his form.

"We are strangers, and come in peace," I answered.

"You lie," he replied, for no strangers can cross the mountains. But what do your lies matter? If you are strangers, you must die, for no strangers

may live in the land of the Kukuanas. It is the King's law. Prepare to die, O strangers."

I saw the hands of some of the men move down to the great knives at their sides.

"What does the fellow say?" asked Good.

"He says we are going to be killed," I answered quietly.

"O Lord?" murmured Good; and, as was his way when he was anxious, he put his hand to his set of teeth, dragged down the upper set and allowed them to fly back with a crack. It was a most fortunate move, for at the next moment the solemn crowd of Kukuanas uttered a shout of terror and bolted back some yards.

"What's the matter?" said I.

"It's his teeth," whispered Sir Henry excitedly.

"He moved them. Take them out, Good, take them out!"

Good obeyed, hiding the set in his hand.

The men advanced slowly—eager and yet afraid. It seemed that they had now forgotten their intention of killing us.

"How is it, O strangers," asked the old man, pointing to Good, who had on him nothing but his shoes and a shirt, "how is it that this fat man has his body clothed but his legs bare, that he wears one shining eye, and has teeth that move of themselves?"

"Open your mouth," I said to Good. Good curled up his lips and showed a mouth as toothless as that of a new-born babe.

"Where are his teeth?" they shouted; "with our own eyes we saw them."

Good passed his hand across his mouth: then

he opened his lips again, and there were two rows of lovely teeth.

Now the young man who had cast the spear gave a howl of terror, and the old gentleman's knees knocked together with fear.

"I see that you are not human," said the old man. "Did ever man born of woman have a round shining eye, or teeth which moved, and melted away, and grew again? Pardon us, O my lords."

"We come from another world," I said, "though we are men such as you. We come from the biggest star that shines at night."

"Oh! Oh!" they cried in wonder.

"We come to stay with you for a short time, and to bless you. Now, should we not strike cold in death the hand which threw a spear at Him-whose-teeth-come-and-go?"

"Spare him, my lords," said the old man; "he is the King's son."

"Perhaps," said I, "you doubt our power to kill him? You!" I cried to Umbopa, "give me the magic pipe that speaks."

Umbopa handed me a gun.

"You see that deer," I said, pointing to an animal standing near a rock about seventy yards away. "Tell me, is it possible for a man born of woman to kill it from here with a noise?"

"It is not possible, my lord," answered the old man.

I raised the gun.

Crack! The deer sprang into the air, and fell on the rock dead.

"We are satisfied," said the old man. "All the witches of our people cannot show a thing like this.

Listen, Children of the Stars, Children of the Shining Eye and Vanishing Teeth, who roar in thunder and slay from far. I am Infadoos, son of Kafa, who was once King of the Kukuana people. This youth is Scrappa, son of Twala, the great King, lord of the Kukuanas, keeper of the Great Road, terror of his enemies, leader of a hundred thousand soldiers, Twala the One-eyed, the Black, the Terrible."

"Is that so?" I said carelessly; "lead us, then, to Twala. We do not talk with low people."

The old man made a deep bow and murmured the words, "Koom, Koom," which I afterwards discovered to be their royal greeting. He then turned and addressed his followers. They at once proceeded to take all our things, in order to carry them for us—except the guns, which they would not touch. They even seized Good's clothes which (as you remember) lay on the ground beside him. He saw this and tried to get them.

"Let not my lord of the Shining Eye and the Melting Teeth touch them," said the old man.

"But I want to put them on!" cried Good. Umbopa repeated this in the Zulu language.

"No, my lord," answered Infadoos. "Would my lord cover up his beautiful white legs? Have we done some evil that my lord should do such a thing?"

"Curse it!" shouted Good, "he's got my clothes."

"Look here, Good," said Sir Henry, "you appeared in this country in a certain character, and you must live up to it. From now on you must live in a shirt, shoes and an eye-glass."

"Yes," I said, "if you change any of these things the people will cease to believe in us: and then our lives will not be worth a penny."

"Do you really think so?" said Good sadly.
"I do indeed."

CHAPTER 8

WE ENTER KUKUANALAND

"INFADOOS," I said as we marched along, "who made this road?"

"It was made, my lord, in ancient times. None know how or when, not even the wise woman, Gagool, who has lived for hundreds of years."

"Has the King many soldiers?" I asked.

"When Twala the King calls up his companies, they cover the plain."

"Has there been any war lately?"

"There was a war lately amongst ourselves. Dog ate dog."

"How was that?"

"It is our custom that, when two sons are born at the same time, the weaker must die. The late king, Kafa, had a brother born with him. But the mother of the king hid away the weaker child. When King Kafa died, his younger brother, Imotu, was made king. But Gagool, the wise and terrible woman, led out Twala, the brother born with the king. Twala killed Imotu, but Imotu's wife escaped with her new-born child, Ignosi; and none have seen her since."

"Then, if this child, Ignosi, had lived, he would be the true king of the Kukuna people?" said I.

"That is so. The mark of the Creeping Beast is

about his middle, with which the eldest son of the King is marked at birth. If he lives, he is king: but he must be dead."

Umbopa was walking just behind me, listening with great interest. As I looked at his face, he seemed like a man struggling to bring something, long ago forgotten, back into his mind.

A message had gone in front of us telling of our coming. In the early afternoon we drew near to a village. As we drew near we saw company after company of men issuing from its gates. It was a splendid sight to see them. They charged swiftly up the rising ground towards us with flashing spears and waving feathers, and made a line on each side of the road. There they stood as if made of iron until we were opposite to them. Then, at a sign given by the commanding officer, from hundreds of throats sprang forth with a sudden roar the royal greeting "Koom!"

These men were called "The Greys" because of the colour of their shield. They were the finest soldiers of the Kukuana nation, and Infadoos was their leader.

As soon as we had passed, the Greys formed up behind us and followed us, marching in our rear with a regular step that shook the ground.

At sunset we stopped to rest on the top of some hills over which the road ran, and there on a beautiful plain before us we saw the city of Loo, capital of Kukuinaland. For a native town it was a very large place, quite five miles round. Near it was a curious hill shaped like a horse-shoe, or like the half-moon. Sixty or seventy miles beyond it rose three strangely shaped snow-capped mountains.

Infadoos saw us looking at these mountains and said, "The road ends there. The mountains are full of caves. It is there that the wise men of old time used to go to get whatever it was that they came to this country for. It is there now that our dead kings are laid in the Place of Death."

I turned to the others and said, "There are Solomon's diamond mines."

Umbopa was standing nearby, lost in thought.

"Yes," he said suddenly, "the diamonds are surely there; and, since you love such toys, you shall have them."

"How do you know that, Umbopa?" I asked rather angrily, for I did not like his strange ways.

He laughed. "I dreamt it in the night," he said, and turned away.

"If my lords are rested," said Infadoos, "we will journey on to Loo. A message has been sent, and a hut is made ready for my lords to-night."

In an hour's time we reached the edge of the town. We came to a great gate. Infadoos gave some word, and we passed through into the main street.

After nearly half an hour's march past endless lines of huts, Infadoos stopped at last by the gate of a group of huts built round a small courtyard.

We entered and found that a hut had been made ready for each of us. Water stood ready in jars, and we washed ourselves. Then some young women brought us food on wooden plates. We had all the beds moved into one hut so that we might be together for safety. Then we threw ourselves down to sleep, very weary after our long journey.

TWALA THE KING**CHAPTER 9****TWALA THE KING**

WHEN we woke the sun was high in the heavens. By the time we had eaten our breakfasts and smoked a pipe, a message was brought to us by Infadoos that Twala the King was ready to see us, if we would be pleased to come.

We took our guns, and some presents for the King, his wives and his chiefs. After walking a few hundred yards we came to a very large court-yard. Exactly opposite the gateway on the farther side of the open space was a large hut in which the king lived. All the rest was open ground. This open ground was filled by many companies of soldiers, to the number of seven or eight thousand. These men stood so still, as if they were cut out of stone, as we advanced through them. It would be impossible to give any real idea of the sight, as they stood there with their waving feathers, their glittering spears, and their iron-backed leather shields.

The space in front of the large hut was empty, but before it were placed several seats. On three of these, at a sign from Infadoos, we seated ourselves, and Umbopa stood behind us. Infadoos stood by the door of the hut. We waited for ten minutes or more in the midst of a dead silence, knowing that we were being gazed at by eight thousand eyes. At last the door of the hut opened and a gigantic figure stepped out, followed by the boy, Scragga, and what appeared to

us to be a dried-up monkey in a fur coat. The King seated himself and Scragga stood behind him. The "dried-up monkey" crept on all four feet into the shade of the hut and sat down.

Still there was silence.

Then the king stood up before us—a truly alarming sight. He was a huge man with the most entirely evil and terrible face we had ever beheld. The lips were thick; the nose was flat; he had one glittering black eye; the other eye had gone and there was only a hollow in the face where it had been. The look of the face was altogether cruel, and bad in every way. From his head rose a number of white feathers. His body was covered with shining chain-mail. In his right hand was a huge spear. About his neck was a thick band of gold, and bound on to his forehead shone a huge diamond.

Still there was silence; but not for long. The King raised the great spear in his hand. Instantly eight thousand spears were lifted in answer, and from eight thousand throats rang out the royal cry of "Koom." Three times this was repeated, and each time the earth shook with the sound as of deep thunder.

"Obey, O people," cried a thin voice which seemed to come from the monkey in the shade; "it is the King."

"It is the King." thundered out eight thousand throats in answer. "Obey, O people; it is the King."

There was silence again, dead silence. Then the silence was broken. A soldier on our left dropped his shield.

TWALA THE KING

Twala turned his cold eye in the direction of the noise.

"Come here," he said in a cruel voice.

A fine young man stepped out and stood before him.

"It was your shield that fell, you dog. Will you shame me in the eyes of these strangers from the stars? What have you to say?"

"It was by chance," he murmured.

"Then it is a chance for which you must pay. You have made me foolish; prepare for death. Scragga, let me see how you can use your spear. Kill this dog."

Scragga stepped forward. Once, twice he waved the spear, and then struck. The young soldier threw up his hands and dropped dead. From the crowd about us rose something like a murmur: it rolled round and round, and died away.

Sir Henry sprang up and let out a curse; then conquered by the sense of silence, he sat down again.

"It was a good stroke," said the King; "take him away."

Four men carried away the body of the murdered man.

"Cover up the marks of blood," cried a thin voice that proceeded from the monkey-like figure. "The King's word is spoken; the King's order is obeyed."

Then a girl came forward bearing a jar filled with earth, which she scattered over the red mark, hiding it from sight.

Sir Henry was boiling with anger. "Sit down!" I whispered. "Our lives depend on it." He yielded and remained quiet.

Twala sat silent until the body had been removed. Then he addressed us,

"White people, where have you come from, and what do you seek?"

"We come from the stars," I answered; "we come to see this land."

"Remember that the stars are far off and you are near. How if I make you as him whom they bore away?"

I laughed aloud—though there was no laughing in my heart.

"Have they not told you how I strike with death from far off?" I said.

"They have told me, but I do not believe them. Kill a man for me among those who stand over there."

"No," I answered. "We do not kill except in just punishment. But drive in a young elephant through the gates and I will strike it dead."

"Let it be done," he said.

"Now, Sir Henry," I said, "do you shoot. I want to show this fellow that I am not the only wizard of the party."

There was a pause. Then we caught sight of an elephant coming straight for the gateway. It came on through the gate; then, seeing the great crowd of people, it stopped.

"Now!" I whispered.

Up went the gun; crack!—and the beast was lying dead.

A Whisper of wonder arose from the thousands around us.

"Now see, I will break yonder spear," I said. I fired, and the blade of the spear was

broken to pieces. There was another whisper of surprise.

Just then I saw the monkey-like figure creeping out from the shadow of the hut. When it reached the place where the King sat, it rose upon its feet and threw the covering from its face. It was the face of a woman of great age, covered with deep yellow wrinkles. Set in the wrinkles was a mouth. There was no nose. Indeed the face might have been taken for that of a sun-dried dead body, had it not been for a pair of large black eyes still full of fire and understanding. The head was perfectly bare and hairless, and yellow in colour. This was Gagool, the witch, so old that none knew how old she was. सूर्योदाहरणी

Cold fear came over us as we gazed upon the terrible sight. The creature stood still for a moment. Then suddenly it threw out a bony hand with finger-nails nearly an inch long. She laid her hand on the shoulder of Twala the King, and began to speak:

"Listen, O King! Listen, O soldiers! Listen, O mountains and plains and rivers, home of the Kukuana race. Listen, O men and women, O youths and maidens, and O ye babes unborn. Listen, all things that live and must die. Listen—the Spirit of Life is in me, and I tell the things which shall be."

Terror seemed to seize the hearts of all who heard the words—and our hearts also.

"Blood! Blood! Blood! Rivers of blood; blood everywhere.

"I am old! I am old! Your fathers knew me and their fathers knew me, and their fathers'

fathers. I have seen much blood. Ha! Ha!
But I shall see more before I die.

"What seek you, White men of the Stars—ah, yes, of the Stars? Do you seek a lost one? He is not here. Never for hundreds of years has a white foot passed this land—and he left it only to die. Do you come for white stones? You shall find them when the blood is dry; but shall you return to the place from which you came, or shall you stop with me? Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"And thou with the dark proud face"—she pointed her finger at Umbopa—"who art thou? I think I know thee. I think I can smell the smell of the blood in thy heart. Strip off that cloth!"

Her face suddenly became death-like, and she fell fainting to the earth.

The King rose up, shaking in every limb, and waved his hand. Instantly the soldiers began to march off, and in ten minutes, except for ourselves, the King and a few servants, the great space was left empty.

"White people," he said, "it passes in my mind to kill you. Gagool has spoken strange words."

I laughed. "Be careful, O King; we are not easy to slay."

He put his hand to his forehead and thought.

"Go in peace," he said at last. "To-night is a great dance. You shall see it. To-morrow I will think."

"It is well, O king," I answered; and Infadoos went with us back to our huts.

CHAPTER 10

THE WITCH-HUNT

ON reaching our hut I signed to Infadoos to enter with us.

"Now, Infadoos," I said, "we would speak with you."

"Let my lords say on."

"It seems to us," I said, "That Twala the King is a cruel man."

"It is so, my lords. The land cries out because of his cruelty. To-night you will see. It is the great witch-hunt, and many will be smelt out as wizards and slain. If the King wants to take a man's cattle or his wife, or if he fears a man, then Gagool, or some of the witch-finding women whom she has taught, will smell that man out as a wizard, and he will be killed. The land is weary of Twala and his red ways."

"Then why is it, Infadoos, that the people do not cast him down?"

"If he were killed, Scragga would rule in his place, and the heart of Scragga is blacker than the heart of Twala his father. If Imotu had never been slain, or if Ignosi his son had lived, it might have been different; but they are both dead."

"How do you know that Ignosi is dead?" said a voice behind us.

"What do you mean, boy?" asked Infadoos. "Who told you to speak?"

"Listen, Infadoos," was the answer. "Years ago the King, Imotu, was killed in this country,

and his wife fled with the boy Ignosi. Is it not so?"

"It is so."

"It was said that the woman and her son died on the mountains. Is it not so?"

"It is even so."

"Yet it so happened that the mother and the boy Ignosi did not die. They crossed the mountains and were led by some wandering desert-men across the sands beyond, till at last they came to water and grass and trees again."

"How do you know this?"

"Listen. The mother died. For years Ignosi lived, working as a servant and as a soldier, but holding in his heart all that his mother had told him of his own place. Then he met some white men who would seek this unknown land, and he joined himself to them."

"Surely you are made to talk thus," said the old soldier.

"Do you think so? See, I will show you, O my uncle."

Then with a single movement Umbopa slipped off the cloth that was about him and stood naked before us.

"Look," he said; "What is this?" and he pointed to the picture of a great creeping beast marked in his skin around the middle of his body.

Infadoos looked with wide-open eyes. Then he fell upon his knees.

"Koom! Koom!" he cried; "it is my brother's son; it is the King."

"Rise; I am not yet king; but, with your help, and with the help of these brave white men,

who are my friends, I shall be. Yet the old witch Gagool was right; the land shall run with blood first, and her blood shall run with it, if she has any, for she killed my father with her words, and drove my mother forth. Now, Infadoos, choose. Will you put your hands between my hands and be my man?"

The old man advanced to where Umbopa (or rather, Ignosi) stood. He fell on his knees before him and took his hand.

"Ignosi, true king of the Kukuanas, I put my hands between your hands, and am your man till death. When you were a babe, I played with you upon my knees, and now my old arm shall strike for you and freedom."

"And you, white men, will you help me?"

I told Sir Henry what he had asked.

"I have always liked Umbopa," said Sir Henry, "and I will stand by him in this business."

"Tell him I'm his boy," said Good; "but he must allow me to wear the rest of my clothes."

"I stand by my friends, Ignosi," said I. "You stood by us, and we will stand by you. But we came, as you know, to look for Sir Henry's lost brother. You must help us to find him."

"That I will do," said Ignosi. "Tell me, Infadoos, has any white man set his foot within this land?"

"None, O Ignosi."

"If any white man had been seen or heard of would you have known it?"

"I should certainly have known."

"You hear," said Ignosi to Sir Henry; "he has not been here."

"Well, well," said Sir Henry sadly, "I suppose that he never got as far. So it has all been for nothing. God's will be done."

"Now for business," I said, eager to escape from a painful subject. "You may be king by right, Ignosi, but how do you intend to become king in fact?"

"I do not know," replied Ignosi. "Infadoos, have you a plan?"

"To-night," answered Infadoos, "there will be the great witch-hunt, and there will be anger in the hearts of many against King Twala. When the dance is over, I will speak to some of the great chiefs and bring them to see that you are indeed the king. I think that by to-morrow you will have twenty thousand spears at your command."

At this moment there was a cry that a message had come from the King. Three men entered, each bearing a shining shirt of chain-mail and a fine battle-axe.

"The gifts of my lord the King," said the chief who had come with them.

"We thank the King," I answered.

At last the sun went down. A thousand watch-fires glowed, and through the darkness we heard the sound of many feet as the soldiers passed to their appointed places to be ready for the great dance.

The full moon shone out, and Infadoos arrived, in armour, with a guard of twenty men to lead us to the dance. Infadoos asked us to put on the shirts of chain-armour under our other clothes. "The King is well pleased," he said, "or much

afraid, or he would not have sent these garments. Put them on to-night." They were rather large for Good and myself, but Sir Henry's fitted his splendid body perfectly. We took our pistols—and the battle-axes.

Arriving at the great courtyard we found it filled by some twenty thousand men, all divided into small groups, with a little path between each group to give space for the witch-finders to pass up and down.

"They are very silent," said Good; and indeed the stillness among such a great gathering of living men was strange and terrible.

"What does he say?" asked Infadoos.
I told him.

"Those over whom the shadow of Death is passing are silent," he answered quietly.

"Tell me," I asked Infadoos, "are we in danger?"

"I know not, my lords. I hope not. But do not seem afraid. If you live through the night all may go well. The soldiers murmur against the King."

In the centre of the open space were placed some seats. We observed a small party coming from the direction of the royal hut.

"It is the King and Scragga his son, and Gagool; and see, with them are those who slay." Infadoos pointed to a little group of about a dozen gigantic men armed with spears.

The King seated himself: Gagool sat at his feet, and the others stood behind him.

"Look round, white lords," said Twala, and he rolled his one cruel eye from company to

company. "See how they shake with fear, all those who have evil in their hearts and fear the judgment of Heaven."

"Begin! begin!" cried Gagool, in her thin voice; "the dogs are hungry, they howl for food. Begin! begin!"

Then for a moment there was a dreadful stillness.

Then the King lifted his spear, and suddenly twenty thousand feet were raised, and then brought down upon the earth. This was repeated three times, making the earth shake. Then from a far point of the circle one sad voice began a song, in which these words were repeated from time to time:

"What is the end of man born of woman?"

Back came the answer, rolling out from every throat in that huge company:

"Death!"

I could not follow the words of the song except that they seemed to tell of man's various hopes and fears and joys. Now it seemed to be a love song, now a grand swelling song of battle, and, last of all, a moaning for the dead, ending suddenly in one heart-breaking cry which went rolling away in waves of sound that seemed to freeze our blood.

Again silence fell upon the place, and again it was broken by the King lifting his hand. Instantly we heard the sound of feet, and from out of the masses of soldiers strange and terrible figures appeared running towards us. They were aged women. Their white hair streamed out behind them as they ran. Their faces were

painted with lines of white and yellow. Round their waists hung waist-bands of human bones, and each held in her hand a bent stick. There were ten of them. They stopped in front of Gagool and cried :

“Mother, Old Mother, we are here.”

“Good! Good!” answered Gagool. “Are your eyes keen, you who see in dark places?”

“Mother they are keen.”

“Good! Good! Are your ears open, you who hear words that come not from the tongue?”

“Mother, they are open.”

“Good! Good! Can you smell blood? Can you clean the land of the cursed ones who plan evil against the King and against their neighbours? Are you ready to do the justice of Heaven above, you whom I have taught, who have eaten the bread of my wisdom and drunk the water of my magic?”

“Mother, we can.”

“Then go! The Slayers make sharp their spears. Go!”

With a wild cry Gagool’s terrible pupils broke away in every direction and ran for various points of the circle. We could not watch them all, so we fixed our eyes on the witch-finder who was nearest to us. When she came to within a few steps of the soldiers, she began to dance wildly, turning round and round, and crying such words as, “I smell him, the evil-doer,” “He is near, he who poisoned his mother,” “I hear the thoughts of him who thought evil of the King.”

Quicker and quicker she danced till she became mad with excitement and her eyes seemed

as if they would leap from her head. Suddenly she stopped, and became still, like a dog smelling a rabbit. Then with outstretched arm she began to creep towards the soldiers before her. It seemed to us that, as she came, their strength gave way and that they drew back from her. As for ourselves, we gazed at her movements as if some terrible charm had come over us.

Suddenly the end came. With a fierce cry she sprang in and touched a tall soldier with her bent stick. Instantly the two men standing next to him seized the unhappy man, one by each arm, and advanced with him towards the King.

As he came, two of the Slayers stepped forward to meet him.

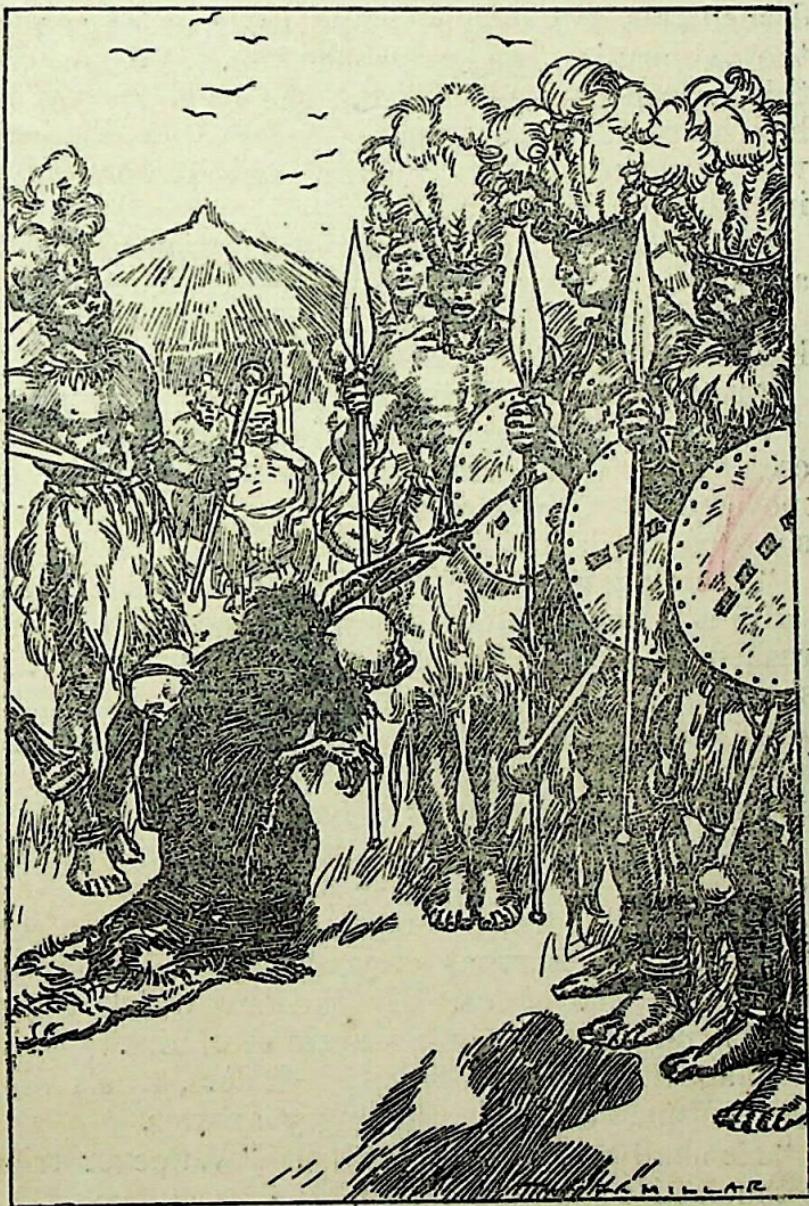
"Kill," said the King.

"Kill," cried Gagool.

Almost before the words were uttered, the terrible deed was done.

Another poor fellow was led up almost immediately after this. And so the game of death went on. Once we rose and tried to stop it, but Twala would hear nothing. "Let the law take its course," he said: "it is well that they should die."

At last the witch-finders gathered themselves together, seeming weary of their bloody work, and we thought that the business was ended. But it was not so; for, to our surprise, Gagool rose from her place and moved forward into the open space. It was a strange sight to see this dreadful yellow-headed old creature slowly gather strength, until at last she rushed about almost as rapidly as her terrible pupils. Suddenly she



SHE DASHED AT A TALL MAN—AND TOUCHED HIM ..

dashed at a tall man standing in front of one of the companies, and touched him. As she did this, a deep cry went up from the company which he commanded. We learnt afterwards that he was a man of great wealth and power, being indeed a cousin of the King.

Then Gagool again sprang this way and that, and began to draw nearer and nearer to ourselves.

"Hang me if I don't believe she's going to try her games on us!" exclaimed Good.

"Impossible," said Sir Henry.

Nearer and nearer danced Gagool, and every creature in that great crowd was watching her movements with burning, anxious eyes. At last she stood still.

"Which is it to be?" asked Sir Henry to himself.

In a moment all doubt was removed, for she rushed in and touched Umbopa (Ignosi) on the shoulder.

"I smell him out," she cried. "Kill him! He is full of evil. Kill him, the stranger, before blood flows for him. Slay him, O King."

There was a pause, of which I instantly made use.

"O King," I called out, rising from my seat, "this man is a servant of your guests. Whoever harms him harms us. By the law which binds guests and host, I claim protection for him."

"Gagool, mother of the witch-finders, smelt him out: he must die," was the angry answer.

"He shall not die," I replied. "Whoever tries to touch him shall die indeed."

"Seize him!" roared Twala to the Slayers who stood around red with blood of the dead.

"Stand back, you dogs!" I shouted, "If you would see to-morrow's light. Touch one hair of his head, and your King dies," and I pointed my pistol at Twala. Sir Henry and Good also drew their pistols, Sir Henry pointing at the leading Slayer, and Good taking careful aim at Gagool.

Twala drew back as he saw the barrel of my pistol come in a line with his breast.

"Well," I said, "what is it to be, Twala?"

Then he spoke:

"You have claimed that he is my guest. For that reason, and not from fear of what you can do, I spare him."

"It is well," I answered quietly, "we are weary of death and would sleep. Is the dance ended?"

"It is ended," said Twala in a low and angry voice. "Let those dead dogs"—he pointed to the long row of slain—"be thrown to the dogs."

He lifted his spear. The soldiers began to march away through the gateway in perfect silence. A small party remained to drag away the bodies of those who had been sacrificed. . . .

"Umbopa," said Sir Henry as we sat down at last in our huts, "you are fortunate; your skin caine near to having an air-hole made in it."

"I am grateful," was Umbopa's answer, "and I shall not forget."

CHAPTER 11

WE GIVE A SIGN

NIGHT was drawing near to dawn when we heard the sound of footsteps. Infadoos entered, followed by half a dozen fine-looking chiefs.

"My lords and Ignosi, true King of the Kukuanas, I have brought with me these men, who are greater men among us, each having command of three thousand soldiers. Now let them also behold the mark of the Creeping Beast and hear your story, so that they may say whether they will join with you against Twala the King."

By way of answer Ignosi took off the cloth that was round him and showed the mark. Each chief in turn drew near and examined it by the dim light of the lamp.

Then Ignosi put on his cloth again, and repeated the history which he had told us in the morning.

"Now you have heard, chiefs," said Infadoos. "What do you say? Will you stand by this man and help him to his father's throne, or will you not? The land cries out against Twala, and the people's blood flows like waters in the spring time. You have seen to-night."

The eldest of the six men, a short, thickly built man, stepped forward and answered :

"Your words are true, Infadoos : the land cries out. My own brother is among those who died to-night. But this is a great matter. Much blood will flow. Many will stand by King Twala, because men bow down to the sun which still shines bright in the sky, rather than to that which has not yet risen. These white men from the stars have great magic, and Ignosi is under their protection. If he is indeed the true King, let the people have a sign. Then men will join us knowing that the white men's magic is with them."

The other five agreed.

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"You have the sign of the Creeping Beast," I said.

"That is not enough: It may have been placed there since the man's childhood. Show us the sign. We will not move without a sign."

I hardly knew what to answer. I turned to Sir Henry and Good and explained what had been said.

"I think I know what we can do," said Good. "Ask them to give us a moment to think."

Good went to the little box which he carried with him, and took out a small printed book. "Now look here, you fellows, isn't to-morrow the fourth of June?" he said.

We answered that it was.

"Very good: then here we have it—'4th June, eclipse of the moon begins at eight-fifteen at Greenwich: the eclipse can be seen in Teneriffe, South Africa'—and so on. There's a sign for you! Tell them we will darken the moon to-morrow night."

The idea was a splendid one; indeed the only weak point in it was the fear lest Good's book might be wrong. If our sign failed, we should be "done for," and so would Ignosi's chance of the throne of the Kukuanas.

"Suppose the book is wrong," said Sir Henry to Good, who was busily working out something on the white end page of the book.

"I see no reason to suppose anything of the sort," was his answer. "I have tried to find the difference in time as well as I can, and I think that the eclipse should begin here about ten o'clock to-morrow night, and go on till half-past twelve."

"Well," said Sir Henry, "I suppose we had better risk it."

I agreed, though doubtfully, and sent Umbopa to call the chiefs back.

When they came I addressed them thus:

"Great men of the Kukuanas, and you, O Infadoos, listen. We do not love to show our powers. But, since this matter is a great one, and we are angered against the King, we have determined to give such a sign that all men may see."

I led them to the door of the hut and pointed to the red ball of the fading moon. "What do you see there?" I said.

"We see the dying moon," they answered.

"To-morrow, two hours before midnight, we will cause the moon to be eaten up for one hour and a half. Deep darkness shall cover the earth, and this shall be a sign that Ignosi is indeed King of the Kukuanas. If we do this, will you be satisfied?"

"Yes, my lords," answered the thickly built man with a smile, "if you do this thing, we shall be satisfied indeed. To-day, two hours after sunset, Twala will send for my lords to watch the girls dance. One hour after the dance begins, the girl whom Twala thinks the fairest will be killed by Scragga, the King's son, as a sacrifice to the Silent Ones, that is, the Stone Gods who sit and keep watch on the mountains yonder." He pointed to the three strange-looking hills in which Solomon's road was supposed to end.

"Then let my lords darken the moon and save the maiden's life, and the people will believe indeed."

"Two miles from Loo," said Infadoos, "there

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is a hill shaped like a new moon. There my soldiers, and three other companies of soldiers whom these chiefs command, are waiting. We will make a plan so that two or three other companies may be moved there also. Then, if in truth my lords can darken the moon, in the darkness I will take you by the hand and lead you out of Loo to that place. There you will be safe; and from there we can make war upon Twala the King."

"It is good." I said. "Now leave us to sleep and to make ready our magic." They departed.

We passed a quiet day. At last the sun set. At about half-past eight a message came from Twala to bid us to the great yearly Dance of Girls.

We put on our mail-shirts and took our guns. The great space in front of the King's hut appeared very different. In place of the lines of soldiers were company after company of Kukuana girls. Each girl was crowned with flowers, and held a large leaf in one hand and a white flower in the other. In the centre of the open moon-lit space sat Twala, with old Gagool at his feet, and near him stood Infadoos, Scragga, and twelve guards. There were also about twenty chiefs there, amongst whom I recognized most of our friends of the night before.

Twala greeted us with a show of politeness, though I saw him eye Umbopa fiercely.

"Welcome again," he said; "and welcome too, you black one. If Gagool here had won her way, you would have been stiff and cold by now."

"I can kill you before you kill me, O King,"

was Ignosi's calm answer, "and you will be stiff before my limbs have ceased to bend."

"You speak boldly, boy," replied Twala angrily; "do not be too daring.... Let the dance begin!"

The flower-crowned girls sprang forward in companies, singing a sweet song and waving their white flowers. On they danced, looking faint and fairy-like in the dim, sad light of the risen moon; now circling round and round: now meeting as in playful battle, coming forward and falling back in ordered crowds delightful to behold. At last they paused, and a beautiful young woman sprang out from among them and began to dance in front of us with wonderful grace. At last she retired, wearied out, and another took her place; then another, and another, and another; but none of them in grace or beauty was equal to the first.

When the chosen girls had all danced, the King lifted his hand.

"Which do you consider the fairest, white men?" he asked.

"The first," said I unthinkingly. At the next moment I was sorry I had spoken, for I remembered that Infadoos had told us that the fairest woman must be offered up as a sacrifice.

"Then my mind is as your minds, and my eyes are your eyes. She is the fairest, and it is a sorry thing for her, for she must die!"

"She must die!" cried out Gagool, casting a look of her quick eyes in the direction of the poor girl who, not knowing of her terrible fate, was standing some ten yards off, picking to pieces a flower from her crown, leaf by leaf.

"Why, O King?" said I, controlling my anger with difficulty.

Twala laughed as he answered, "It is our custom. The Gods must have their sacrifice, or evil will come upon me and upon my house." Then turning to the guards he said, "Bring her here; Scragga, make sharp your spear."

Two men stepped forward. Then for the first time the girl understood; she cried aloud and turned to fly. But strong hands caught her fast and brought her struggling and weeping before us.

"What is your name, girl?" said Gagool. "What? will you not answer? Shall the King's son do his work at once?"

Scragga advanced a step and lifted his great spear. I saw Good's hand creep to his pistol. The girl saw the glitter of the spear through her tears. She ceased struggling and stood clasping her hands and shaking with fear.

"Oh, mother, my name is Foulata. Why must I die? I have done no wrong!"

"Be comforted," said the old woman in a hateful voice full of evil laughter. "You must die as sacrifice to the Old Ones who sit yonder, and she pointed to the mountains. "It is better to sleep in the night than to be weary in the day-time; it is better to die than to live, and you shall die by the royal hand of the King's own son."

The girl Foulata clasped her hands in despair, and cried aloud, "Oh, cruel! and I so young! What have I done that I should never again see the sun rise out of the night, or the stars come following on his track in the evening; that I may

no more gather the flowers when the dew is heavy, nor listen to the laughing of the waters; that I should never see my father's hut again, nor feel my mother's kiss, nor care for the lamb that is sick; that no lover shall put his arm around me and look into my eyes, nor shall men-children be born of me? O cruel, cruel, cruel."

And again she clasped her hands and turned her flower-crowned tear-dewed face to heaven, looking so lovely in her despair.

But this did not move Gagool or Gagool's master, though I saw pity on the faces of the guards and of the chiefs. As for Good, he gave a fierce cry of anger, and made a movement as though to go to her help. With a woman's quickness she saw what was passing in his mind, and threw herself before him.

"O white father from the stars, keep me from these cruel men, and from Gagool."

"All right, my girl, I'll look after you," said Good. "Come, get up," said he, and bent down and took her hand.

Twala turned and gave a sign to his son, who advanced with his spear lifted.

"Now's your time," whispered Sir Henry to me. "What are you waiting for?"

"I'm waiting for that eclipse," I answered. "I've had my eye on the moon for the last half-hour, and I never saw it look healthier."

"Well, you must risk it now, or the girl will be killed."

I stepped between the girl and the advancing spear of Scragga.

“ King,” I said, “ it shall not be.”

“ Shall not be! Ho! guards, seize these men!”

At this cry armed men ran swiftly from behind the hut. It was clear that they had been put there in readiness.

Sir Henry, Good and Umbopa stood by my side and lifted their guns.

“ Stop! ” I shouted. “ We, the Men from the Stars, say that it shall not be. Come but one step nearer and we will put out the moon and the land shall be in darkness. We who dwell in the Moon’s House can do this. Dare to disobey and you shall taste of our magic.”

“ Hear him! Hear his lies! ” cried Gagool, “ that he will put out the moon like a lamp. Let him do it, and the girl shall be spared. Let him do it, or die by the girl, he and those with him.”

I gazed up at the moon despairingly. To my joy I saw that Good had made no mistake. On the edge of the moon lay a faint circle of shadow.

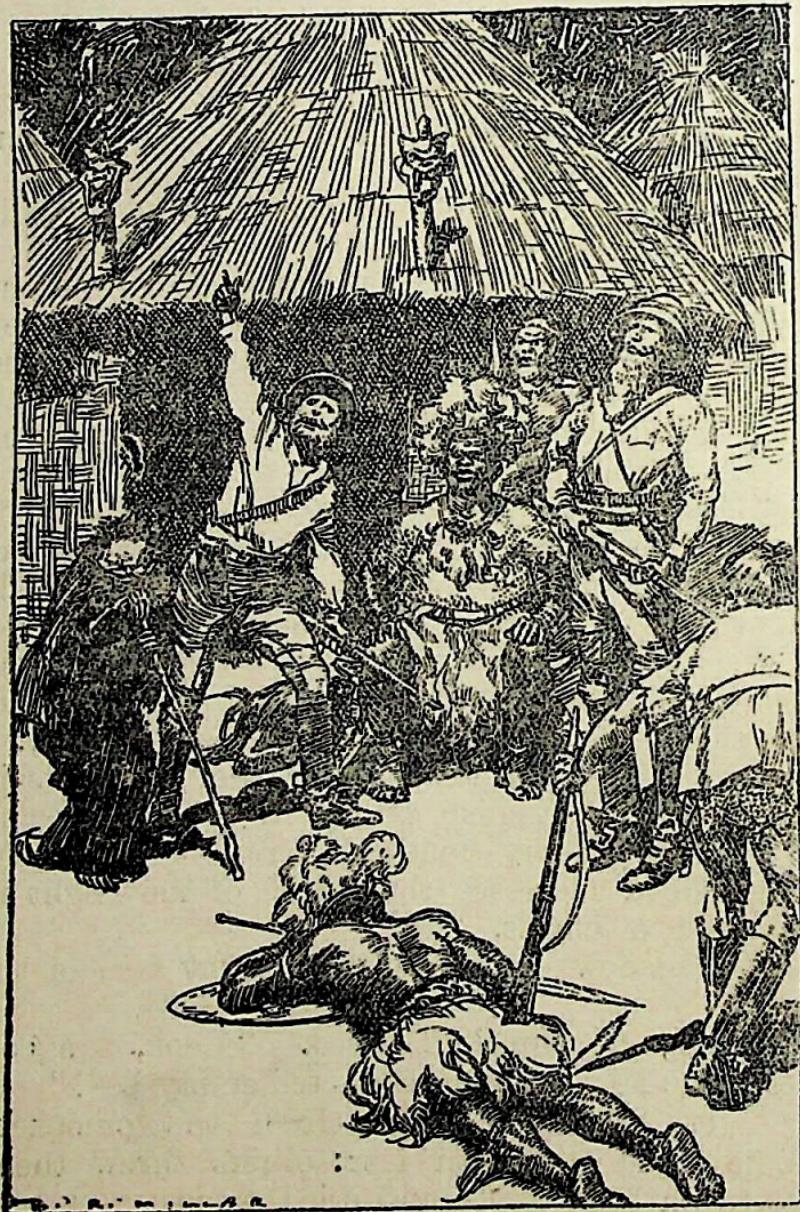
Then I lifted my hand towards the sky and said some lines of English poetry in a most solemn voice. Sir Henry followed with more poetry. Then Good addressed the Queen of the Night in a stream of curses.

The shadow crept over the bright face of the moon.

“ Look, O King,” I cried. “ Look, Gagool! see if the Men from the Stars tell empty lies! ”

A cry of terror burst from the onlookers. Some stood stiff with fear: others threw themselves on their knees and cried aloud.

“ Keep on, Good,” I whispered. “ I can’t remember any more poetry. Curse away.”



"LOOK! O KING!" I CRIED

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Good obeyed me nobly. Never before had I the slightest idea of the full range of a ship's officer's power of cursing. For ten minutes he went on without stopping, and he never repeated himself.

The dark ring crept on, and the great crowd fixed their eyes on the sky, and gazed in silence. Everything grew still as death. Half of the moon was already hidden. On, on, on, till we could scarcely see the fierce faces of the group before us.

"The moon is dying—the white wizards have killed the moon," cried the Prince Scragga at last. Then, whether in mad fear or anger—or both—he lifted his spear and drove it with all his force at Sir Henry's breast. He had forgotten the mail-shirts which the King had given us. The spear struck harmless, and before he could repeat the blow, Sir Henry seized the spear and sent it straight through him. Scragga dropped dead.

At the sight, and driven mad with fear of the gathering darkness, the companies of girls broke up, and ran crying out wildly to the gateway. The King, followed by his guards and Gagool, fled to the huts. In another minute we found that we ourselves, Foulata, Infadoos and the chiefs whom he had brought to us, were left alone in the place with the dead body of Scragga.

"Chiefs," I said, "if you are satisfied, let us go swiftly to the place of which you spoke."

Before we reached the gate the moon went out utterly.

Holding each other by the hand we struggled on through the darkness.

CHAPTER 12

BEFORE THE BATTLE

WE reached the hill at last where Infadoos and the six chiefs had put their men. There we found crowds of men wakened from their sleep, shaking with fear and crowded together in the uttermost terror at the natural event which they were beholding.

We reached a hut in the centre where we found men waiting, loaded with our few things which we had left behind in Loo. They had brought also Good's long-lost lower garment.

With a cry of delight Good rushed at them and proceeded to put them on.

"Surely my lord will not hide his beautiful legs," said Infadoos sadly.

As soon as the sun was up, the soldiers were all gathered on a large open space, where Infadoos and Ignosi addressed them. They gave the royal greeting of "Koom," which was a sign that they accepted Ignosi as their King.

We then set to work to protect the place in all ways possible.

At last, at about midnight, everything that could be done was done. Sir Henry and I, Ignosi and some of the chiefs made a round of the place. We returned, finding our way through thousands of sleeping men. The moon light glimmered on their spears and played upon their

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faces. The cold night wind moved their tall feathers. There they lay, with arms outstretched and bent limbs, looking strange and unhuman in the moonlight.

"How many of these do you suppose will be alive at this time to-morrow?" asked Sir Henry.

I shook my head.

To-morrow many thousands, perhaps ourselves among them, would be stiff and cold, and their place would know them no more for ever. Only the old moon would shine on peacefully, and the night winds would gently move the grass; and the wide earth would take its rest, as it did long before we were, and will do long after we are forgotten.

Yet man dies not while the world, at once his mother and his grave, remains. His name is lost indeed, but the breath he breathed still moves the tree-tops on the mountains; the sound of the words he spoke still rings on through the starry space.

CHAPTER 13

THE BATTLE

AT dawn we arose and dressed ourselves for the battle. Sir Henry put on the full dress of a Kukuana soldier, and a very fine sight he was.

We went out and found Infadoos in the midst of his own men, the Greys, the finest set of men in the Kukuana army. Ignosi joined us. The men were watching the army of Twala beginning to creep out of Loo in a long ant-like line.

"Infadoos, my uncle," said Ignosi, "my heart

is fixed. I will strike at Twala this day and set my fortunes on the blow. You see how the hill bends round like a half-moon and how the plain runs like a green tongue towards us within the circle."

"We see," I answered.

"Let your company, my uncle, advance with one other company down to the green tongue. When Twala sees it, he will throw his whole army against it to destroy it. But the place is narrow, and the companies can only come against you one at a time. While the eyes of all Twala's army are fixed upon the fight on the narrow tongue, the rest of our army will creep along the two horns of the hill, and will fall upon Twala's army from the two sides; and so his army shall be utterly destroyed."

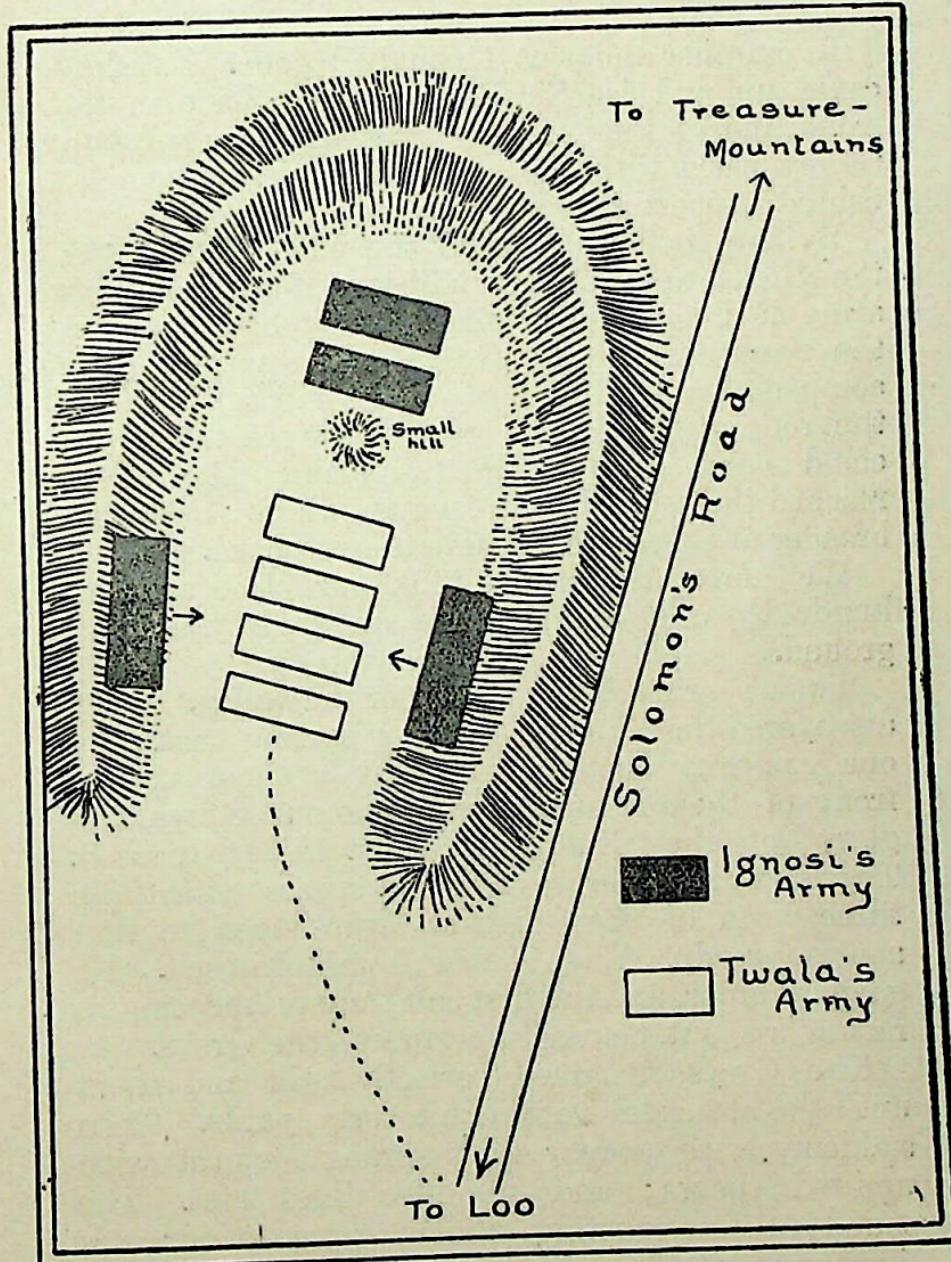
The arrangements for the attack were made very rapidly, for the soldiers were well drilled. The men hastily took a meal and then marched off to their places.

Soon after this Good came up to Sir Henry and myself.

"Good-bye, you fellows," he said; "I am off to the people on the right. I have come to shake hands in case we do not meet again."

We shook hands in silence.

"It is a strange business," said Sir Henry, "but I do not expect to see to-morrow's sun. I shall be with the Greys. The Greys will have to fight until there is not a man left of them so as to let the rest of the army get round the sides. Well, so be it. It will be a man's death. Good-bye, cold fellow."



PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF HALF-MOON HILL

In another moment Good had gone. Infadoos came up and led Sir Henry to his place in the front line of the Greys. I departed with Ignosi to my place with the second company who were behind, supporting the Greys.

By the time we reached the edge of the slope, the Greys were already half-way down. Twala's army had now drawn near. They had observed the movement of the Greys, and company after company was starting forward, hastening to reach the root of the tongue of land before the Greys could come out on to the plain. The Greys reached the centre of the tongue, where it became broader at its centre. There they stopped.

We moved down and took our place about a hundred yards behind them on slightly higher ground.

Twala's army began to enter the valley. They discovered that the space was so narrow that only one company could advance at a time, and in front of them they saw the famous Greys, the glory of the Kukuana army. They paused. There was no eagerness to cross spears with those three lines of fierce fighters who stood so firm and so ready. Then I saw Twala himself. He gave an order, and the first company of the enemy, raising a shout, charged up towards the Greys.

The Greys remained perfectly still and silent until the attackers were within forty yards. Then suddenly with a roar they sprang forward with uplifted spears; and the two lines met. The sound of the meeting shields came to our ears like thunder. The plain seemed to be alive with flashes of light thrown from the glittering spears.

The mass of struggling men swung this way and that, but not for long. Suddenly the attacking lines began to grow thinner. Then, with a slow rise and fall, as when a great wave flows over a rock, the Greys passed over them. It was done. That company was completely destroyed. But the Greys had only two lines left now. A third part of their number was dead.

They closed up shoulder to shoulder, and waited for the second attack. I was rejoiced to catch sight of Sir Henry's yellow beard as he moved about arranging the men. So he was yet alive!

Again came the dreadful thunder of meeting shields. This time the struggle was longer. Just when we thought that the Greys were done for, and were preparing to take their place, I heard Sir Henry's deep voice ringing out, and saw his circling battle-axe as he waved it high above his head. Then came a change. The Greys ceased to give way. They stood still as a rock against which the waves of spear-men broke again and again. Then they began to move once more—forward this time. Then the attackers broke away in flying groups, their white head-dresses streaming in the wind.

Of the Greys, less than a quarter remained. And yet they shouted and waved their spears. Then, instead of falling back upon us, as we expected, they ran forward a hundred yards after the flying groups of foemen to a little piece of rising ground, and formed three rings around it. There, thanks be to Heaven, I saw Sir Henry, seeming unhurt, with our old friend Infadoos,

Then Twala's companies rolled down upon them, and once more the battle closed in.

"Are we to stand here till we put out roots, Ignosi, while Twala swallows our brothers yonder?" I asked.

As I spoke, a company rushed past the ring upon the little hill and attacked it from the nearer side.

"Now is the moment," cried Ignosi. Lifting his battle-axe he gave the sign to advance, and we charged with a rush like the rush of the sea.

What followed immediately on this, it is out of my power to tell. There was a terrible shock, a roar of voices, and a flashing of spears seen through a red mist of blood. When my mind cleared, I found myself inside the ring of the Greys just behind Sir Henry himself.

As for the fight that followed, who can describe it? Again and again they attacked us, and again and again we beat them back. But every moment our circle grew smaller. It was a fine sight to see that old soldier, Infadoos, as calm as ever, giving orders, laughing from time to time just to keep up the spirits of his few remaining men; then, as each charge rolled on, stepping forward to wherever the fighting was thickest, to take his share. Even finer was the sight of Sir Henry whose long yellow hair streamed out in the wind. None could live before his stroke. As he struck, he shouted "O-hoy! O-hoy!" and the blow went through shield and spear and head, till at last none would, of their own will, come near the white wizard who killed and failed not.

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Suddenly there rose a cry of "Twala! Twala!" and out of the mass of men there sprang forward the gigantic one-eyed King.

"Where is the white man who killed my son? See if you can kill me!" he shouted, and threw a spear straight at Sir Henry, who caught it on his shield.

Then with a cry Twala sprang forward straight at him and struck him such a blow upon the shield that the mere force of it brought Sir Henry to his knees.

Just at that instant there rose a cry of despair from the soldiers pressing round us, and on looking up I saw the cause. To the right and left the plain was alive with charging men. Our men had worked round the sides and were attacking the enemy from all directions at once. The moment could not have been better chosen. Just as Ignosi had expected, all Twala's army had fixed their eyes on the bloody struggle which was going on round the Greys. It was not until our horns were closing upon them that they dreamt of our approach. And now, before they could get their men into proper order to defend themselves, our attackers had leapt like dogs upon their sides.

In five minutes the fate of the battle was decided. Twala's companies broke and fled. Soon the whole plain between us and Loo was scattered with groups of running men, flying from the battle-ground. As for the foemen who had been attacking our circle, they melted away as though by magic, and we were left standing there like a rock from which the sea has retired.

But what a sight it was ! Around us the dead and dying lay in masses. Of the brave Greys there remained but ninety-five men upon their feet. More than three thousand four hundred had fallen, most of them never to rise again.

We marched to Loo.

On arriving before the nearest gate of Loo, we found a company of our men watching it. The officer in command of these men greeted Ignosi as King, and told him that Twala's army was inside the town, and that Twala himself was there also. He said that they were thoroughly beaten and would probably yield. Ignosi sent forward a man to the gate, ordering the defenders to open it, and promising, on his royal word, life and forgiveness to every man who laid down his arms. Soon after this, amid the shouts of our men, the gate was opened, and we marched into the town.

All along the roadways stood soldiers, with bent heads, their shields and spears at their feet. As Ignosi passed, they greeted him as King. We marched straight to Twala's hut. We found the great space, where a few days before we had seen the witch-hunt, deserted. No, not quite deserted, for there, on the farther side in front of his hut, sat Twala himself. Only one person was with him—Gagool.

It was a sad sight to see him seated, his battle-axe and shield by his side, his head bent, with but one old woman for companion. Not a soldier of all his armies, nor even a wife, remained to share his fate, or share with him his grief. Poor fellow, he was learning the lesson which Fate teaches to most of us who live long enough, that the eyes of

THE BATTLE

men are blind to the conquered, and that he who is fallen finds few friends and little mercy.

Our party advanced towards him, Gagool cursing us as we came. At last Twala lifted his head; his one eye seemed to flash almost as brightly as the great diamond bound round his forehead, as he fixed his gaze on Ignosi.

"Greeting, O King," he said in cold anger. "What fate have you for me, O King?"

"The fate which you gave to my father on whose throne you have sat these many years," was the answer.

"It is good. But I demand the right of the Kukuana royal house—to die fighting."

"It is granted. Choose—with whom will you fight? Myself, I cannot fight with you, for a king fights only in war."

Twala's eye ran up and down our line, and I felt for a moment that it rested on me. What if he chose to begin by fighting me? What chance should I have against that huge man, six feet five inches high? Hastily I decided to refuse, even if all men laughed at me.

Then Twala spoke, turning to Sir Henry:

"What do you say? Shall we end what we began today? Or are you afraid?"

"No," said Ignosi hastily. "You shall not fight with him."

"Not if he is afraid," said Twala.

Unfortunately Sir Henry understood these words, and the blood flamed up into his cheeks.

It is a law of the Kukuanas that a man of royal blood may not be put to death. He is allowed to choose one man after another, with whom he fights until one of them kills him.

"I will fight him" he said; "he shall see if I am afraid."

"For heaven's sake," I begged, "do not risk your life against that of a man who is determined to die."

"I will fight him," was the calm answer. "No living man shall call me 'afraid'. I am ready now," and he stepped forward and lifted his axe.

Twala laughed, and, stepping forward, faced Sir Henry. For a moment they stood thus, and the light of the sinking sun clothed them both in fire.

Then they began to circle round each other, their battle-axes raised.

Suddenly Sir Henry sprang forward and struck a fearful blow at Twala, who stepped to one side. So heavy was the stroke that the striker nearly fell forward after it. Twala was quick to seize his chance. Swinging his great battle-axe round his head, he brought it down with terrible force. My heart jumped into my mouth. I thought that the fight was finished. But no; with a quick movement of the left arm Sir Henry set his shield between himself and the blow, with the result that the edge of the shield was cut away and the blow fell on his left shoulder, but not heavily enough to do any serious damage. In another moment Sir Henry got in a second blow which was also received by Twala upon his shield. Then followed blow upon blow. The excitement became fierce. The onlookers shouted at every stroke. Good had been wounded in the leg during the battle and was lying in a fainting condition on the ground near me. He recovered, and, sitting up, saw what was going on. In an instant he was up. He caught hold of my arm and

jumped about on one leg, dragging me after him, and shouting to Sir Henry :

" Go it, old fellow," he cried. " That was a good one ! Give it him hard ! "

Sir Henry caught a fresh stroke upon his shield and then hit out with all his force. The blow cut through Twala's shield and through the chain-mail behind it, wounding him in the shoulder. With a cry of pain Twala returned the blow, and such was his strength that he cut through the handle of Sir Henry's battle-axe and wounded him in the face.

A cry of despair rose from the onlookers as the head of Sir Henry's axe fell to the ground. Twala again raised his axe and flew at him with a shout. I shut my eyes.

When I opened my eyes again it was to see Sir Henry's shield lying on the ground and Sir Henry himself with his great arms round Twala's middle. This way and that they swung, using all their strength for dear life and dearer honour. Twala swung Sir Henry right off his feet ; and down they came together, rolling over and over on the ground, Twala striking out at Sir Henry's head with the battle-axe, and Sir Henry trying to drive his knife through Twala's armour.

It was a mighty struggle, and a terrible thing to see.

" Get his axe," shouted Good ; and perhaps Sir Henry heard him. He dropped the knife and reached out at the axe which was fastened to Twala's arm by a piece of leather. Still rolling over and over, they fought for it like wild cats. Suddenly the leather string burst. Sir Henry got free, the weapon remaining in his hand. At

the next moment he was upon his feet, the red blood streaming from the wound in his face, and so was Twala. Drawing his heavy knife he rushed straight at Sir Henry and struck him on the breast; but the chain-mail stood against the blow. Again he struck, and again the knife leapt back. Then, swinging the big axe round his head, Sir Henry hit at him with all his force. There was a shout of excitement from a thousand throats. Twala's head seemed to spring from his shoulders. Sir Henry, faint from loss of blood, fell heavily across the body of the dead King.

CHAPTER 14

THE PLACE OF DEATH

AFTER the fight was ended Sir Henry and Good were both carried into Twala's hut. Sir Henry recovered rapidly from his wounds, but Good was not so fortunate. He became very seriously ill; and, had it not been for the nursing of Foulata, he might have died. I can see the whole picture as it appeared night after night by the light of our little lamp—Good throwing himself about on the bed, his face thin and white, his eyes large and shining, talking senselessly in his illness; and, seated on the ground by his side, the soft-eyed Kukuana beauty, her face, weary as it was, lit up by a look of unending pity. For two days we thought he must die. Only Foulata would not believe it.

"He will live," she said.

After the turn had once been taken, Good recovered rapidly. Sir Henry told him of all he owed to Foulata.

"I owe her my life," said Good. "I will never forget her kindness."

Foulata answered softly, "No, my lord; my lord forgets. Did he not save my life? Am I not my lord's slave-maiden?"

Soon after Good had recovered his strength again, Ignosi held a great meeting and was recognized as King by all the chiefs. The remaining men of the Greys were thanked before the whole army for their splendid fighting in the great battle. The King gave each man a large present of cattle, and he made them officers in the new company of Greys which was being formed.

Afterwards we had a short visit from Ignosi, on whose forehead the royal diamond was now bound.

"Greeting, O King," I said rising.

"Yes, King at last by the might of your three right hands," was the ready answer.

I asked him what he had decided to do with Gagool.

"I should kill her," he answered, "and all the other witch-hunters with her. She has lived so long that none can remember when she was not old. She has always trained the witch-hunters and made the land evil."

"Yet she knows much," I replied. "It is easier to destroy knowledge than to gather it."

"That is so," he said; "she only knows the secret of the Silent Ones yonder where the great road runs. But I have discovered something. There is a great cave deep in the mountain where the dead kings of the land are put: it is their grave. There you will find Twala's body, sitting with those who went before him. There also is a deep hole

from which at some time men long dead got the precious stones. There, too, in the place of Death, is a secret room known to none but Gagool. Yet there is a story in the land that many, many years ago a white man crossed the mountains and was led by a woman to the secret room and was shown the wealth hidden in it. But before he could take it, the woman told the King about him, and he was driven back to the mountains."

"The story is true, Ignosi; for on the mountains we found the white man," I said.

"Yes, we found him," answered Ignosi. "And now, if you can reach that secret room, and the stones are there, you may have as many of them as you can take—if indeed you wish to leave me, my brothers."

"First we must find the secret room," said I.

"There is only one person who can show it to you—Gagool," replied Ignosi.

"And if she will not?"

"Then she must die," answered Ignosi. "I have saved her alive only for this. Stay, she shall choose." He called a man and ordered Gagool to be brought before him.

In a few minutes she came, hurried along by two guards whom she was cursing as she walked.

"Leave her," said the King. She sank onto the floor.

"What do you want of me, Ignosi?" she said. "If you touch me, I will slay you with my magic."

"Your magic could not save Twala, and it cannot hurt me," was the answer. "Listen: I want you to tell me where is the secret room where the shining stones are hidden."

"Ha! Ha!" she cried. "None knows its secret but I, and I will never tell you."

"If you do not tell, you shall die."

"I will not show it. You dare not kill me. You dare not."

Slowly Ignosi brought his spear down till it pricked the mass of rags on the floor.

With a wild cry Gagool sprang to her feet, then fell again and rolled on the floor.

"I will show it. Only let me live and sit in the sun, and I will show you."

"It is well. To-morrow you shall go with Infadoos, and my white brothers, and be careful that you do not fail, or you shall die—slowly."

"I will not fail, Ignosi. I always keep my promise. Once before a woman showed the secret room to a white man, and evil came to him." Her eyes glittered. "Her name was Gagool also. Perhaps I was that woman."

"You lie," I said. "That was hundreds of years ago."

"Perhaps. When one lives long, one forgets. Perhaps it was my mother's mother who told me. Her name was Gagool also. You will find in the place a bag full of stones. The man filled the bag, but he never took it away. Evil came to him."

The party contained our three selves, Foulata who served us (especially Good), Infadoos and Gagool, who was carried, and, under the covering which hid her, she could be heard murmuring and cursing.

We marched along Solomon's great road to the foot of the centre hill, and there stopped. For an

hour and a half we climbed up a path edged with bushes, going so fast in our excitement that the men who were carrying Gagool could scarcely keep up with us.

At last we saw before us a huge hole in the ground three hundred feet, or more, deep.

"Can't you guess what this is?" I said to Sir Henry. He shook his head.

"Then it is clear that you have never seen the great diamond mine at Kimberley. You may be sure that this is Solomon's diamond mine."

The path divided into two and went round the two sides of the mine. We pressed on, eager to see the three towering objects which we had observed on the other side. As we drew near, we saw that they were huge human figures, cut out of the rock. These were the "Silent ones." The figure in the centre was of a woman; the face had been destroyed by the effects of weather. The figure on the right had the face of a devil: the face on the left was calm—a dreadful, cruel calm.

The men carrying Gagool came up to us, and that lady was assisted to get down. Foulata put some dried meat and two pots of water in a basket that we might take with us.

Straight in front of us rose a wall of rock eighty feet or more in height. Gagool carried a lamp in her hand. She cast one evil look upon us, then, leaning on a stick, moved off towards this wall. We followed her till we came to a narrow arched door.

Here Gagool was waiting for us, still with that evil look upon her face.

"Now, white men from the stars," she said, "are you ready? I am here to do the bidding of my lord the King, and to show you the store of bright stones."

"We are ready," I said.

"Good! Good! Make strong your hearts to bear what you shall see. Are you coming also, Infadoos?"

"No," replied Infadoos, "it is not for me to enter there. But be careful how you deal with my lords. If a hair of them is hurt, Gagool, you shall die. Do you hear?"

"I hear. I am here to do the bidding of the King. I have done the bidding of many kings, till in the end they did mine. Ha! Ha! I go to look upon their faces once more, and Twala's also. Come on, come on, here is the lamp."

"Are you coming, Foulata?" asked Good.

"I fear, my lord," answered the girl.

"Then give me the basket."

"No, my lord; where you go, there I go also."

Gagool passed through the door. The way was narrow, just wide enough for two to go side by side. When we had gone about fifty yards we saw that the way was growing faintly light. Another minute and we were in perhaps the most wonderful place that the eyes of living men have beheld.

Think of the hugest hall you ever stood in, window-less indeed, but dimly lighted from above, and you will get some idea of the great cave in which we found ourselves.

Running in rows down its sides were gigantic towers of what looked like ice, but they had

really been formed by the action of the drops of water falling from the roof. Each drop carries in it certain salts, which in time become hard as ice. In this way, in the course of hundreds of years, the falling drops had built up towers of glassy material. It is impossible for me to give any idea of the beauty of these towers, some not less than twenty feet across at the bottom, springing up in perfect loveliness to the distant roof; while high above, hanging from the roof, the points of huge icy needles could dimly be seen.

Even as we gazed we could hear God's building proceeding. For, after a few moments, with a tiny sound, a drop of water would fall from the far-off needle onto the tower below. In about a thousand years the tower would be raised one foot. So slow is Nature's working.

We had not enough time to examine this beautiful cave as thoroughly as we should have liked to do, for Gagool seemed only anxious to get her business done. On she led us, straight to the end of the great silent cave, where we found another doorway, not arched as the first was, but square at the top.

"Are you prepared to enter the Place of Death, white men?" asked Gagool, in the hope of making us uncomfortable.

"Lead on," said Good, trying to look as if he was not at all alarmed—as we all did, except Foulata, who caught hold of Good by the arm for protection.

"This is getting rather unpleasant," said Sir Henry, peeping into the dark doorway. "Come on, Quatermain; the eldest goes first. Don't

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keep the old lady waiting." And he politely made way for me to lead the party—for which I did not bless him.

I heard the sound of Gagool's stick, *tap, tap*, along the floor. On she hurried, laughing to herself. But I felt some strange sense of evil, and waited.

"Come on, old fellow," said Good, "or we shall lose our fair guide!"

I started, and after about twenty steps found myself in a room about forty feet long and thirty feet broad which had been cut out of the mountain by hand-labour. It was not so well lit as the great cave, and at first all I could see was a stone table running down the whole length of it, with a huge white figure at its head and white figures seated all round it. Next I discovered a brown thing seated on the table in the centre. In another moment my eyes became accustomed to the light; I saw what these things were, and I ran out of the place as quickly as my legs would carry me.

I am not usually afraid of such things, but this sight certainly frightened me, and, had not Sir Henry caught me and held me, I honestly believe that in another five minutes I should have been outside the large cave; and not all the diamonds in the world would have got me to enter it again. But he held me tight; so I stopped because I could not help myself. Next moment his eyes became used to the light, and he let go of me; he put his handkerchief to his forehead to dry the cold drops which gathered there. As for Good, he murmured curses; while Foulata threw her

arms round his neck and cried aloud. Only Gagool laughed loud and long.

It was a terrible sight. There at the end of the table, holding in his bony finger a great white spear, sat Death himself. The figure was shaped in the form of a huge human body—or rather the bare bones only—fifteen feet or more in height. High above his head he held the spear, as though in the act to strike. One hand rested on the table in front of him, as when a man is just rising from his seat. The head was bent forward, and its hollow eyeplaces seemed to be fixed upon us, as if he were about to speak.

"Great heavens!" said I faintly at last, "what can it be?"

"And what are those things?" asked Good, pointing to the white company round the table.

"Hee! Hee! Hee!" laughed Gagool. "To those who enter the Hall of the Dead, evil comes. Hee! Hee! Come, you who are so brave in battle, come and see the man whom you killed;" and the old creature caught Sir Henry's coat in her skinny fingers and let him away towards the table. We followed.

Then she stopped and pointed at the brown object seated on the table. Sir Henry looked, and gave a cry of surprise—for there, quite naked, seated on the table was the body of Twala, last King of the Kukuanas, with its head on its knees—the head which Sir Henry had cut off in the fight. Over the body was gathered a thin glassy covering which made it appear even more terrible. At first we could not understand this. Then we observed that from

the roof the water fell steadily drop by drop onto the neck and ran down over the dead body. Then I guessed what this glassy covering was. Twala's body was being changed by the action of the water into a stone—by just the same action as had made those wonderful towers and needles in the great cave. Twala's body was being changed into stone!

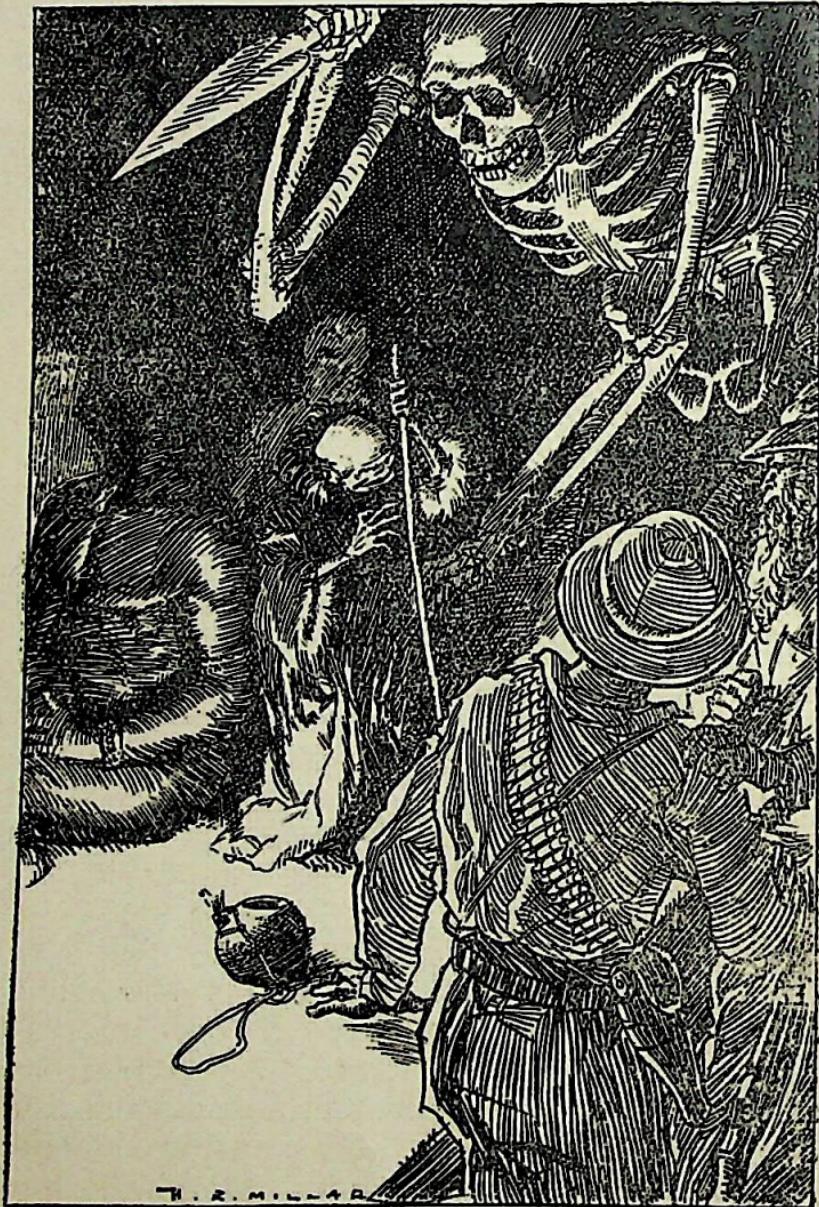
A look at the white forms seated round the stone table proved the correctness of this idea. They were human bodies—or rather they had been human; now they had become stone. This was the way in which the Kukuana people had from ancient times preserved their royal dead. Exactly how it was done, I never discovered—whether they merely placed them for a number of years under the falling drop, or whether something else was done also; but there they sat, iced over, and preserved for ever.

Such was the White Death, and such were the white dead.

CHAPTER 15

SOLOMON'S TREASURE HOUSE

WHILE we were recovering from our alarm and examining the wonders of the Place of Death, Gagool had been differently occupied. She had climbed up onto the great table and made her way to where our friend Twala was placed under the drops. Good suggested that she wanted to see how he was "cooking"; or perhaps she had some dark purpose of her own. Then she went and addressed words, which I could not catch,



SHE HAD CLIMBED ONTO THE TABLE

to some of the other forms, just as you or I might greet an old friend. She then sat down on the table just under the White Death, and began to offer up prayers to it. The sight of this terrible old creature pouring out prayers—evil ones, no doubt—to the chief enemy of Man was so unpleasant that it caused us to hasten on.

"Now, Gagool," I said in a low voice, for somehow one dared not speak above a whisper in that place, "lead us to the Treasure Room."

The old creature immediately got down from the table.

"My lords are not afraid," she said, peering up into my face.

"Lead on."

"Very good, my lords;" and she went round to the back of great Death; "here is the room; let my lords light the lamp and enter."

She put the lamp, which she had been carrying, on the floor, and leaned herself against the side of the cave. I took a match and lit the lamp, and then looked for the doorway; but there was nothing before us except the plain wall of rock.

Gagool laughed. "The way is there, my lords. Ha ! Ha !"

"I do not see it," I answered angrily.

"Behold !" and she pointed at the rock.

As she did so, we saw that a mass of stone was rising slowly from the floor and vanishing into the rock above. Very slowly and gently the great stone raised itself, until at last it had vanished entirely and a dark hole was seen in the place where it had been.

Our excitement was so great when we saw the

way to Solomon's Treasure House thrown open at last that I, for one, began to shake in every limb. Would it prove to be nothing after all, I wondered or was Old Da Silvestre right? and was there huge wealth stored in that dark place, wealth which would make us the richest men in the whole world? We should know in a minute or two.

"Enter, white men from the stars," said Gagool, advancing into the doorway: "but first hear your servant Gagool the old. The bright stones that you will see were taken from the hole over which the Silent Ones sit, and were stored here by whom, I know not. Only once has this place been entered since the time when those, who stored the stones, departed in haste, leaving them behind. It happened that a white man reached this country from over the mountains and was well received by the king of that day—that king who sits yonder," and she pointed to the fifth king at the Table of the Dead. "There was a woman of this country who by a chance had learnt the secret of the door: you might search for a thousand years and you would never find it. The white man entered with this woman. He found the stones, and filled the skin of a small goat with them. As he was going, he took up one more stone, a large one and held it in his hand." Here she paused.

"Well," I asked, breathless with interest as we all were, "what happened to Da Silvestre?"

The old creature seemed surprised at hearing his name.

"How do you know the dead man's name?" she asked quickly; and then, without waiting for an answer, went on: "For some reason the white

man became frightened, for he threw down the goat skin, and fled out with only the one stone in his hand. And that stone the King took, and it is the stone which was taken from Twala's forehead, the stone which Ignosi now wears."

"Have none entered here since?" I asked, peering into the dark room.

"None, my lords. Every king has opened it, but he has not entered. There is a saying that those who enter will die within one moon, even as the white man died in the cave on the mountain where you found him. Ha! Ha! Mine are true words."

Our eyes met as she said it, and I turned sick and cold. How did the old creature know all these things?

"Enter, my lords. If I speak truth, the goat-skin with the stones will lie upon the floor; and whether it is true that it is death to enter here—that you will learn afterwards. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

She passed through the doorway, bearing the light with her.

"Oh, curse it all," said Good, "I am not going to be frightened by the old devil;" and, followed by Foulata, who was shaking with fear, he went through the doorway after Gagool. We followed.

A few yards in front Gagool had paused and was waiting for us.

"See, my lords," she said, holding the light before her, "those who stored the treasure here fled in haste. They tried to guard against any who might discover the secret of the door, but they had not the time." She pointed to an unfinished wall

of stone about two feet high, which had been begun with the purpose of blocking the way.

Here Foulata, who was in a great state of fear said that she could go no farther, but would wait there. So we set her down on the unfinished wall, putting the basket of food by her side, and left her to recover.

About fifteen yards farther on, we came suddenly to a curiously painted wooden door. It was standing open. Whoever was last there had not found the time, or had forgotten, to shut it.

Just in this doorway lay a bag, formed of goatskin, that appeared to be full of stones.

"Hee! Hee!" laughed Gagool, as the light from her lamp fell upon it. "Did I not tell you that the white man who came here fled in haste and dropped the bag? Behold it!"

Good bent down and lifted it.

"By heaven! I believe it's full of diamonds," he said in a whisper.

"Go on," said Sir Henry. "Here, give me the lamp." He took it from Gagool's hand and stepped through the doorway.

We pressed in after him, forgetting for the moment the bag of diamonds, and found ourselves in Solomon's Treasure-room.

It was a room cut out of the rock, and not more than ten feet square. On the opposite side of the room were about twelve wooden boxes, painted red.

"There are the diamonds," I said. "Bring the light."

Sir Henry did so. The wood of the box had been made soft by time, and had been broken in, probably by Da Silvestre himself. Putting in my

hand I drew it out full, not of diamonds but, of gold pieces marked with strange letters. There must have been about two thousand pieces in each box. I suppose this was the money to pay the workmen and merchants.

"Well," said Good, "I don't see any diamonds unless Da Silrestre put them all in that bag."

"Let my lords look yonder where it is darkest, if they would find the stones," said Gagool. "There are three stone chests, two shut and one open."

"Look in that corner, Sir Henry," I said.

"Great heavens!" he cried. "See here."

We hurried across to where he was standing. Against the wall were placed three stone chests, each about two feet square.

"See," he repeated, holding the lamp over the open chest.

We looked, and for a moment could see nothing because of the silvery glitter. When our eyes got used to it, we saw that the chest was three parts full of uncut diamonds, most of them of large size.

"We shall be the richest men in the whole world," I said.

We stood still and gazed at each other, the lamp in the middle and the glimmering jewels below.

"Hee! hee! hee!" laughed old Gagool behind us. "There are the bright stones which you love, as many as you like. Take them in your fingers. Eat them, hee! hee! Drink them, ha! ha!"

There they were, millions of pounds' worth of diamonds and thousands of pounds' worth of gold, only waiting to be taken away.

We set to work to open the other two chests.

The first of them was full to the top. The other was only about a quarter full, but the stones were chosen ones, some as large as eggs. A good many of these, we could see, were not of good colour.

What we did not see was the look of fearful hatred which old Gagool gave us as she crept out of the treasure-room towards the great door of rock.

• • • • •
Listen! Cry upon cry comes ringing through the cave. It is Foulata's voice.

"Help! Help! Oh help! The stone falls."

"Leave go, girl. Then——!"

"Help! help! she has killed me!"

By now we are running; and this is what the light from the lamp shows us. The door of rock is closing down slowly; it is not three feet from the floor. Near it are struggling Foulata and Gagool. The red blood of Foulata runs down to her knee, but the brave girl still holds the old witch, who fights like a wild cat. Ah! she is free! Foulata falls, and Gagool throws herself on the ground to creep through the crack of the closing stone. She is under—ah! God! too late! too late! The stone presses her. She shouts in terrible pain. Down, down it comes, all the huge weight of it. Cry upon cry such as we never heard: then a long dreadful *crack*, and the door was shut, just as, rushing down, we threw ourselves against it.

It was all done in a few moments.

We turned to Foulata. There was a great knife in her breast and I saw that she could not live long.

Good held her in his arms. "Oh, I die. She crept out—Gagool. I did not see her. I was faint. And the door began to fall. Then she came back. I caught her and held her. She struck at me with the knife, and I die."

"Poor girl! poor girl!" cried Good.

She looked round. "Is your friend here? It grows so dark, I cannot see."

"I am here, Foulata," I answered.

"Be my tongue for a moment, because he cannot understand me, and, before I go into the darkness, I would speak a word."

"Say on, Foulata."

"Say to my lord that—I love him. Say that I am glad to die because I know that his life cannot join with mine in this world. Say that since I saw him, at times I have felt as though there were a bird in my heart which would one day fly away and sing elsewhere. Even now, though I cannot lift my hand, I do not feel as though my heart were dying; it is so full of love that it could live a thousand years and yet be young. Say that, if I live again, perhaps I shall see him in the stars, and that I will search them all. Say—no, say no more, only that I love."

"She is dead—she is dead," cried Good, rising in grief, the tears running down his honest face.

"You need not let that trouble you, old fellow," said Sir Henry.

"Eh!" said Good. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that you will soon join her. Don't you see that the door is shut, and that this is our grave."

For a few minutes we stood there over the dead body of Foulata. All the strength seemed to have gone out of us. The first shock of this idea of the slow and terrible end that lay before us, was too much for us. We saw it now; that she-devil Gagool had planned this for us from the first. It must have been just the merry idea that her evil mind would have rejoiced in the idea of the three men slowly dying of thirst and hunger in the company of the Treasure which they had desired. Now I saw the meaning of her words about "eating" and "drinking" the diamonds. Perhaps someone had tried to treat poor old Silvestre in the same way when he dropped the skin full of jewels.

"We must do something," said Sir Henry. "The lamp will soon go out. Let us see if we can find the handle that works the rock."

We sprang forward with wild eagerness, and began to feel up and down the door and the rock at the sides. But we could discover nothing.

"You may be sure," I said, "that it does not work from the inside. If it did, Gagool would not have risked trying to creep underneath the stone."

"We can do nothing with the door," said Sir Henry. "Let us go back to the treasure-room."

We took up the body of poor Foulata and laid it beside the boxes of gold. As I passed the unfinished wall, I took up the basket of food.

Then we seated ourselves, leaning our backs against the three stone chests of diamonds.

"Let us divide the food," said Sir Henry, "so as to make it last as long as possible."

We did so. There was enough food and water to support life for about a couple of days.

We each ate a little and drank some water.

We did not feel hungry though we were really in great need of food. We felt better after swallowing it. Then we got up and proceeded to examine the walls and floor of our prison in the faint hope of finding some way out.

There was none. It was not probable that there would be any second entrance to a treasure-room.

"Quatermain," said Sir Henry, "what is the time?"

I looked to see. It was six o'clock. We had entered the cave at eleven.

"Infadoos will miss us," I said. "If we do not return to-night, he will search for us in the morning."

"He does not know the secret of the door," replied Sir Henry, "nor even where it is. Even if he found the door he could not break it down. All the Kukuana army could not break through five feet of rock. My friends, I see nothing for it but to bow ourselves to the will of God. The search of treasure has brought many to a bad end; we shall go to swell their number."

The lamp grew dimmer yet.

Then it burned bright for a moment and showed the whole scene, the boxes of gold, the body of poor Foulata stretched before them, the goat-skin full of treasure, the dim glimmer of the diamonds, and the wild white faces of us three men seated there waiting for death.

Then the flame sank down, and went out.

CHAPTER 16

WE LOSE HOPE

I CANNOT give any real description of the night which followed. It is a mercy that we did sleep a little, but I myself found it impossible to sleep much. It was not so much the thought of the terrible death drawing so near, as the *silence* which prevented me from sleeping. Reader, you have known what it is to lie awake at night, and feel the silence press upon you; but you have no idea what is perfect silence. In a house there is always some sound which, though you may not hear it, takes off the sharp edge of perfect silence. But here there was none. We were imprisoned in the centre of a huge snow-topped mountain. Thousands of feet above us the fresh air rushed over the white snow, but no sound of it reached us. Five feet of rock separated us even from the dreadful Hall of the Dead; and the dead make no noise. All the guns of earth and the thunder of heaven could not have come to our ears in that living grave. We were cut off from every murmur of the world—we were as men already dead.

And there around us lay treasures enough for a whole nation, yet we would have given them all gladly for the faintest chance of escape. Soon, no doubt, we should be rejoiced to change them for a bit of food or a cup of water, and after that even for the mercy of a speedy close to our sufferings.

And so the night wore on.

"Good," said Sir Henry's voice at last, and it sounded terrible in that great stillness, "how many matches have you in the box?"

"Eight."

"Strike one and let us see the time."

He did so, and, after that thick darkness, the flame nearly blinded us. It was five o'clock. The beautiful dawn was now glowing rose-red upon the snow far over our heads, and the wind would be awaking the night-mists in the hollows.

"We had better eat something and keep up our strength," I said.

"What is the use of eating?" answered Good; "the sooner we die and get it over, the better."

"While there is life, there is hope," said Sir Henry.

So we ate, and then drank a little water.

Time passed.

Then we got as near to the door as possible and shouted on the faint chance of somebody catching a sound outside. Good, from long practice at sea, made a fearful noise. I never heard such shouts. They produced no effect.

After a time we gave it up and came back very thirsty. Then we stopped shouting as it used up our supply of water too quickly.

So we sat down once more against the chests of useless diamonds. There was nothing to do, and we could do nothing. And at last I gave way to despair. Laying my head against Sir Henry's broad shoulder, I burst into tears, and I think I heard Good weeping on the other side and cursing himself for doing so.

Ah, how good and how brave that great man was. Had we been two frightened children, and he our nurse, he could not have treated us more tenderly. Forgetting his own share of trouble he did all he could to cheer us, telling stories of men who had made wonderful escapes when all hope had been lost. And, when these failed to cheer us, he pointed out that the end which must come to us all, would be very soon over, and that such a death would be a very easy one (which was not true). Then in a quiet sort of way he said that we might throw ourselves on the mercy of a higher power and ask God to help us.

His was a beautiful character, very quiet and very strong.

And so somehow the day went on as the night had gone—if, indeed, one can use these words when all was the thickest night. When I lit a match to see the time, it was seven o'clock.

Once more we ate and drank, and, as we did so, an idea came to me.

"How is it," said I, "that the air in this place keeps fresh?"

"Great Heavens!" said Good, leaping up, "I never thought of that! It can't come through the stone door: that would let no air through. It must come from somewhere. If there was no air coming in, we should not be able to breathe by now. Let us have a look."

It was wonderful what a change this mere glimmer of hope wrought in us. In a moment we were all creeping about on our hands and knees, feeling, feeling for the slightest sign of incoming air. For an hour or more we went on,

till at last Sir Henry and I gave it up in despair. But Good still continued, saying, with some cheerfulness, that it was better than doing nothing.

"I say, you fellows," he said, after some time, in an excited voice, "come here."

I need not tell you that we went towards him quickly enough.

"Quatermain, put your hand here, where mine is. Now do you feel anything?"

"I think I feel air coming up."

"Now listen." He rose and struck the place with his heel: a flame of hope shot up in our hearts; it rang hollow.

With shaking hands I lit a match. There were only three matches left. As the match burnt, we examined the spot. There was a crack in the rock-floor, and, great heavens! set level with the rock, was a stone ring. We said no word; we were too excited to speak. Good had a knife: he opened it and worked round the ring to loosen it. Finally he worked it under the ring and pressed it gently up. The ring began to move. Soon he had got the ring up. He put his hands into it and pulled with all his force; but nothing moved.

"Let me try," I said. I took hold and pulled, but with no result.

Then Sir Henry tried, and failed.

Good worked his knife all round the crack where we felt the air coming up. Then he took off a strong black silk handkerchief which he wore, and passed it through the ring. "Quatermain, take Sir Henry round the middle and pull for dear life when I give the word. Now!"

Sir Henry put out all his huge strength, and Good and I did the same with such power as Nature had given us.

"Pull! pull! It is yielding," said Sir Henry. Suddenly there was a cracking sound, then a rush of air, and we were all on our backs on the floor, with a heavy stone on the top of us. Sir Henry's strength had done it; never did strength help a man more.

"Light a match, Quatermain," he said, as soon as we had got up and recovered our breath; "carefully now."

I did so, and there before us, heaven be praised was the first step of a stone stair.

"Now what is to be done?" asked Good.

"Follow the stair, of course, and trust to our good fortune."

"Stop!" said Sir Henry; "Quatermain, get the meat and the water that are left; we may need them."

I went creeping back to our place by the chests. As I was coming away, an idea struck me. I thought I might put a few of the diamonds in my pocket in the hope that we might get out of this terrible place. So I just put my hand into the first chest and filled all the pockets of my coat, and finally I put in a few of the big ones from the third chest.

"I say, you fellows," I said, "won't you take some diamonds with you? I've filled my pockets."

"Oh, curse the diamonds," said Sir Henry. "I hope I may never see another one."

As for Good, he made no answer. He was, I

think, taking his last farewell of all that was left of the poor girl who had loved him so well.

"Come on, Quatermain," said Sir Henry, who was already standing on the first step of the stone stair. "Steady; I will go first."

"Be careful where you put your feet," I answered. "There may be some hole underneath."

"More probably another room," said Sir Henry.

He descended slowly, counting the steps as he went.

When he got to fifteen he stopped. "Here is the bottom," he said. "Thank heaven there seems to be a sort of way on. Come on down."

On reaching the bottom, we lit one of the two remaining matches. By its light we saw two narrow doorways, left and right, in front of us. There arose the question of which way to go. Then Good remembered that when I lit the match the air blew the flame to the left. "Let us go against the wind," he said. "Air blows inwards not outwards." So we went to the right against the wind.

Feeling along the wall with one hand and trying the ground before us at every step, we departed from that cursed treasure-room on our terrible search for life. If ever the treasure-room is entered again by living man (which I do not think probable), he will find signs of our visit in the open chests of jewels, the empty lamp and the white bones of poor Foulata.

We went on for about quarter of an hour. Then the path took a sharp turn, or else ran into another path. We followed this, and in course of time we were led into a third path. And so it went on for some hours.

At last we stopped, thoroughly weary, and almost in despair again. We seemed to be lost in the endless underground ways. We ate our last piece of meat and drank our last drop of water. It seemed that we had escaped death in the darkness of the treasure-room only to meet it in the darkness of these underground ways.

Then I thought that I caught a sound. I told the others to listen also. It was very faint and very far off; but it was a sound, a faint, murmuring sound, for the others heard it too, and no words can describe the blessedness of it after all those hours of utter stillness.

"By heaven! it's running water," said Good. "Come on."

Off we started again in the direction from which the faint murmur seemed to come, feeling our way as before, along the rocky walls. As we went, the sound became clearer, till at last it seemed quite loud in the quiet of the place. On and on: now we could hear the rush of the water quite plainly. Now we were quite near to it and Good, who was leading, said that he could smell it.

"Go gently, Good," said Sir Henry; "we must be close."

Suddenly there came a cry from Good. He had fallen in.

"Good! Good!" we shouted in terror, "where are you?" Then to our joy, an answer came back in a faint voice.

"I've got hold of a rock. Strike a light to show me where you are."

Hastily I lit the last remaining match. Its faint light showed us a dark mass of water running

at our feet, and some way out was the dim form of our companion holding onto a rock.

"Be ready to catch me," shouted Good. "I must swim."

We heard a struggling in the water. In another minute he had caught Sir Henry's hand and we had pulled him up out of the water.

"My word!" he said, "that was a near escape. The stream is terribly fast. If I had not caught that rock, I should have been done for."

We dared not follow the river for the fear that we might fall into it again in the darkness. We had a good drink of the water, and then went back the way we had come.

At last we came to a path leading to our right. "We may as well take it," said Sir Henry. "All roads are the same here. We can only go on until we drop."

Utterly worn out, we struggled along, Sir Henry now leading the way.

Suddenly he stopped, so that we ran into his back.

"Look!" he whispered. "Am I going mad? Or is that light?"

We gazed, and there, yes, there far away in front of us was a faint glimmering spot.

With a cry of hope we pushed on. In five minutes there was no longer any doubt, it was a glimmer of light. A minute more and a breath of real live air came to us. The way became narrower. Sir Henry went on his knees. The way became smaller and smaller. It was earth now: the rock had ceased.

A struggle, and Sir Henry was out; and so was Good: and so was I. And there above us were

the blessed stars, and the sweet air was on our faces. Then suddenly something gave way, and we were all rolling over and over through grass and bushes and soft wet soil.

I caught at something and stopped. A shout came from Sir Henry who had been stopped by some level ground. We found Good caught by the root of a tree.

We sat down together there on the grass. I think we cried for joy. We had escaped that terrible room which was so near to becoming our grave. Surely God had guided our footsteps through those underground pathways. And see, yonder on the mountain the dawn which we had never hoped to look upon again.

The grey light of day came creeping down the slopes, and we saw that we were at the bottom, or nearly at the bottom, of the deep mine in front of the entrance of the cave.

The day grew brighter. We could see each other now. Hollow-cheeked, hollow-eyed, covered with dust and dirt and blood, the long fear of death still written on our faces, we were a sight to frighten the daylight.

We rose, and with slow and painful steps, began to struggle up the sloping sides.

At last it was done, We stood by the great road. At the side of the road, a hundred yards off, a fire was burning in front of some huts, and round the fire were men. We moved towards them, supporting one another and stopping after every few steps. Then one of the men rose, saw us, and fell on the ground crying out for fear.

"Infadoos, Infadoos! It is we, your friends."

He rose and ran towards us, "Oh, my lords, my lords, come back from the dead!"

CHAPTER 17

FOUND!

TEN days later we were back in our huts in Loo, strange to say, little the worse for our terrible experience.

Ignosi listened with the greatest interest to our wonderful story. When we told him of Gagool's end he became thoughtful. "This was a strange woman," he said. "I rejoice that she is dead."

"And now, Ignosi," I said, "the time has come for us to bid you farewell. You came with us as a servant, and we leave you a mighty King. May you rule justly, and may success go with you. To-morrow at dawn you will give us a company of men who shall lead us across the mountains. Is it not so, O King?"

Ignosi covered his face with his hands. Then at last he answered.

"My heart is heavy. What have I done that you should leave me? You who stood by me in battle, will you leave me in the day of peace and victory?"

I laid my hand on his arm. "Ignosi," I said, "when you wandered in Zulu-land and among the white people in Natal, did not your heart turn to the land your mother told you of, your native land, where first you saw the light, where you played when you were little, the land where your place was?"

"It was even so."

"In the same manner, Ignosi, do our hearts turn to our land and to our own place."

There was a silence. When Ignosi broke it, it was in a different voice.

"Infadoos, my uncle, shall take you by the hand and guide you. There is another way across the mountains which he will show you. Farewell, my brothers. See me no more, for I have not the heart to bear it. Go now, lest my eyes rain down tears like a woman's. At times, as you look back down the path of life, or when you are old and gather yourselves together to sit by the fire because for you the sun has no more heat, you will think how we stood shoulder to shoulder in the great battle. Farewell for ever, my lords and friends."

Ignosi rose and gazed at us for a few moments. Then he threw the corner of his garment over his head so as to cover his face from us.

We went in silence.

As we travelled, Infadoos told us that there was another way over the mountains. He also told us that, a few days' march from the mountains on that side, there was, as it were, an island of trees and rich land in the midst of the desert. We had always wondered how it was that Ignosi's mother bearing the child should have lived through the dangers of that long journey across the mountains and the desert. It was now clear to us that she must have taken this second path.

At last we had to bid farewell to that true friend and fine old soldier, Infadoos. He solemnly wished all good upon us, and nearly wept with grief. After seeing that our guides had plenty of

water and food, we shook him by the hand. His soldiers gave a thundering farewell cry of "Koom"; and we began our downward climb.

By noon of the third day's journey from the foot of the mountains, we could see the trees of which Infadoos had spoken, and within an hour of sunset we were walking once more upon grass and listening to the sound of running water.

And now I come to perhaps the strangest thing that happened to us in all this strange business.

I was walking along quietly some way in front of the other two, when suddenly I stopped and rubbed my eyes—as well I might. There, not twenty yards in front of me, under the shade of a tree, was a pretty little hut.

"What can that hut be doing here?" said I to myself. Even as I said this, the door of the hut opened, and there came out of it a *white man* dressed in skins. He seemed to be walking painfully as if his right leg were broken. He had a large black beard. I thought that I must have gone mad. It was impossible. No hunter ever came to such a place as this. Certainly no hunter would ever settle in it. I stood gazing at the other man, and he stood and gazed at me. Just at this moment Sir Henry and Good walked up.

"Look here, you fellows," I said, "is that a white man, or am I mad?"

Sir Henry looked, and Good looked, and then all of a sudden the white man with the black beard uttered a great cry and began to come towards us. When he was close, he fell down in a sort of faint.

With a spring Sir Henry was by his side.

"Great heavens," he cried, "it is my brother, George!"

Hearing the sound, another figure also clothed in skins, came from the hut, a gun in his hand and ran towards us. On seeing me, he, too, gave a cry.

"Don't you know me, Bass?" he shouted. "I'm Jim the hunter. I lost the note you told me to give to my master, and we have been here nearly two years." And he fell at my feet, weeping for joy.

"You careless, good-for-nothing fellow," I said, "you ought to be well beaten."

The man with the black beard had recovered and risen. He and Sir Henry kept shaking hands with each other without a word to say. Whatever they had quarrelled about in the past—probably a lady—it was clear that it was forgotten now.

"My dear old fellow," said Sir Henry at last, "I thought you were dead. I have been over Solomon's Mountains to find you."

"I tried to go over Solomon's Mountains nearly two years ago," was the answer, spoken in the strange voice of a man who has had little occasion of late to use his tongue, "but a rock fell on my leg and broke it and I have been able neither to go forward nor back."

Then I came up. "How are you, Mr. Neville?" I said. "Do you remember me?"

"Why," he said, "isn't it Quatermain, eh—and Good, too? Hold on a minute, you fellows; I'm feeling faint again. It is all so very strange, and, when a man has ceased to hope, so very happy."

That evening over the camp-fire George Curtis told us his story. He had heard from the natives that this was the best direction from which to approach the Solomon Mountains. They suffered much in crossing the desert. Finally, just as they reached this place, a terrible accident happened to George Curtis. When he was climbing, a great rock fell on his leg breaking it to pieces, so that he found it impossible to go forward or back, and preferred to take the chance of living there where he had built his hut than the certainty of dying in the desert.

As for food, they had got on well enough, for they had guns and plenty of shot, and large numbers of animals came there at night because of the water. These they shot and ate, and used the skins for clothing.

"And so," George Curtis ended, "we have lived for nearly two years like a second Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday hoping that some natives might come here to help us away; but none have come. And now you appear! I thought that you had long ago forgotten about me and were living comfortably in England. But you appear, and find me where you least expected. It is the most wonderful thing I ever heard of—and the most fortunate for me!"

Our journey across the desert was very difficult, especially as we had to support George Curtis, whose right leg was very weak. But we did accomplish it somehow. To tell about the journey would only be to repeat much of what happened to us on the former occasion.

Six months later we were safe at my little house near Durban, where I am now writing.

Just as I had written this last word, a native postman came up the path carrying a letter. It was from Sir Henry, and I give it in full:

BRAYLEY HALL,

YORKSHIRE,

October 1, 1884.

MY DEAR QUATERMAIN,—I sent you a letter a few weeks ago to say that the three of us, George, Good and myself, reached England all right.

We went up to London together. You should have seen Good the next day—beautiful new clothes, beautiful new eye-glass. I went and walked in the park with him. I met some people whom I knew, and at once told them the story of Good's "beautiful white legs." He is very angry, especially as somebody has printed it in the newspaper.

To come to money matters—Good and I took the diamonds to Streeter's to find out what was their real value. Really I'm afraid to tell you what they put the value at; it seems so huge. They advised us to sell a few at a time, as we shall get a better price in that way. They offered a hundred and eighty thousand pounds for a small part of the stones.

I want you to come home, dear old friend, and buy a house near here. You have done your day's work and have plenty of money now. There is a house which you can buy quite close here, which will suit you excellently. Do come;

the sooner the better. If you start immediately you get this letter, you will be home by Christmas and you must promise to stay with me for that.

Good-bye, old boy; I can't say more, but I know that you will come, if it is only to please.

Your friend,

HENRY CURTIS.

The axe with which I cut off Twala's head is fixed above my writing-table. I wish we could have brought away the coats of chain-armour.

H. C.

To-day is Tuesday. There is a ship going on Friday. I really think I must do as Curtis says.

QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1

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5. What is the name of the man who is supposed to be telling this story?
How old is he?
What was he doing at an age when other boys are at school?
How many months ago did he meet Sir Henry Curtis and Captain Good?
6. Where did he meet them?
Describe Sir Henry Curtis.—(Age; hair; beard; size; face.)
Describe Captain Good.—(Officer; height; hair; in order; eye-glass; teeth.)
7. Describe how it happened that Sir Henry discovered Q.'s (Quatermain's) name during the talk at dinner.
8. What did Q. (Quatermain) say about Neville in the letter which was sent on to Sir Henry?—(Baman-gwalo; Jim; Inyati; wagon.)
9. Who was Neville, and why did he leave home to go to Africa?
10. For what purpose had Sir Henry come to Africa?

CHAPTER 2

10. Where was George Curtis trying to go?
11. What did the old witch tell Evans about the land beyond the Suliman Mountains?—(Mines; people; a branch of.....; wizards.)
12. Tell about José Silvestre.—(Where did Q. meet him? What did J. S. say as he started out? In what condition did J. S. return? Describe how J. S. sat up at dawn. What did he give to Q.?)
14. Where was the paper written? By whom was it written?

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16. Tell what was written in the message.—(With what and in what was the message written ? "With my own eyes I have seen....." what ? Who deceived him ? Where does Solomon's road lie ?)
17. Who was Jim ?
18. What did Jim say he was going to get ?
Who had told Jim about Solomon's mines ?
What did Q. tell Jim to give to his master ?
At what place was Jim to give this ?
19. What did Sir Henry ask Q. to do ?
What was Quatermain to receive for this ?—(a)
and (b)

CHAPTER 3

20. Where did the three men stay in Durban ?
What did Q. buy ?
What guns and pistols did they take ?
How many servants did they want to take ?
What was Ventvogel ?
What did Khiva know ?
21. Describe Umbopa.—(Size ; age ; colour ; ringed ; face.)
Describe how and where Q. first met Umbopa. What did Umbopa want to do ?
22. Describe how Umbopa stood up, and what Sir Henry said, and what Umbopa said.

CHAPTER 4

23. What was the distance from Durban to Sitanda's Kraal ?
23. Why had they to go on foot for the last three hundred miles ?
In what month did they leave Durban ? In what month did they reach Sitanda's Kraal ?
Describe the song of Umbopa as they set out from Inyati.
24. Describe how Khiva saved Good's life and was killed.
Describe Sitanda's Kraal.—(Village ; fields ; veldt ; stream ; slope ; desert ; sunset ; mountains.)

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25. Umbopa said, "It is a far journey." Give Sir Henry's reply—as much of it as you can.
What strange thing did Umbopa say then?

CHAPTER 5

26. What things did they take into the desert?—(5.....; 3.....; 5.....; 25.....; our.....; a.....; some.....)
What did the three natives from the village do, and what payment was promised to them?
What did they (Q., Sir H. and Good) do all day?
What did they do at sunset?
For what did they wait?
27. What did Sir Henry ask them to do just before they started?
What had they to guide them? (Two things.)
Why did they have to stop every few miles?
Describe the colours of dawn in the desert.
28. Where did they rest?
What happened at three o'clock?
What creatures did they see when they started out at four o'clock?
29. What shelter did they have on the next day?
Near what did they stop at two o'clock on the following day?
What did Q. hear Umbopa say to himself?

CHAPTER 6

29. Describe how Ventvogel and Sir Henry discovered the water.
What did they find when they reached the foot of the mountain and the water was finished?
30. Describe the finding of the entrance to the cave.
31. Describe the night in the cave and the death of Ventvogel.
32. Describe the finding of José da Silvestre's body.—
(Another form; head; long arms; nose; hair;
skin; stiff. Who? Impossible! Why not?
Piece of bone; wound. Unending watch. How many hours?)

PAGE

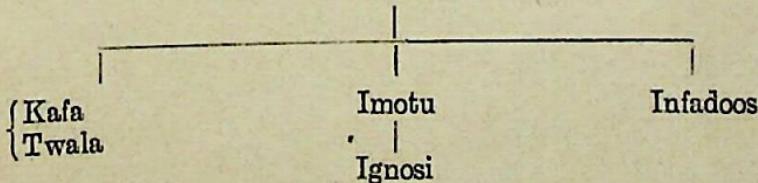
CHAPTER 7

32. Describe how they shot and ate a deer.—(Slope below; deer; all shot; smoke; O joy! rush; uncooked; strength come back.)
33. Describe the view which they saw.—(Forest; river; pasture; hills; fields; road.)
What was Good doing on the bank of the stream?—
(Clothes; shoes; hair.)
34. What made Good spring up?
What language did the people speak?
What did the old man ask?—(a) Where.....?
(b) Why.....?
What is the law about strangers in Kukuanaland?
35. What did Good do when he was anxious? What was the effect of this? (Describe the scene.)
What did the old man ask about Good? (Three things.)
Describe the trick which Good did with his teeth.
36. From what place did Q. say that he came?
Describe how Q., with the help of his gun, frightened the Kukuanas.
37. Who was the old man?
Who was the young man? (Give in full the titles of his father.)
Tell how Good's clothes were taken away.

CHAPTER 8

38. Tell how Gagool made Twala King—

Old King



Who should be the true King of the Kukuanas now?
What is the sign of a Kukuna king?

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39. Describe how they were met by the Greys.
 Describe Loo and the country round it.—(..... miles round; horse-shoe; three mountains; dead kings.)
40. Q. said, "There are King Solomon's diamond mines." What did Umbopa say then?
 Describe how they arrived at Loo; entered, found huts, washed, ate, went to bed.

CHAPTER 9

41. Describe what they saw on entering the courtyard of the King.—(Soldiers; number of soldiers; dress of soldiers; huts, seats.)
 Who came with the King?
42. Describe Twala's face and his dress.—(Evil; lips; nose; eye; hollow; look of face; feathers; chain-mail; right hand; neck; forehead.)
 Describe how the soldiers greeted Twala.
43. Describe why and how the young man was killed.—(Shield; Twala; Scragga; marks; Sir Henry.)
44. Describe how Q. showed the power of his gun.
45. Describe Gagool the witch.—(Face; nose; eyes; head; age.)
46. "What seek you, White men from the stars?—A lost one?" What did Gagool say after that?
 "Do you come for white stones?" What did Gagool say after that?
 "And thou with the proud face." What did Gagool say to Umbopa?
 What happened to Gagool at the end of her song?

CHAPTER 10

47. What does Twala do if he wants to take a man's cattle or his wife?
 Why do not the people cast out Twala?
48. Repeat the story which Umbopa told showing that he was really Ignosi.
 How did Umbopa show that he was really Ignosi?

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49. Ignosi asked Infadoos if he would help him to become King: how did Infadoos answer?—"I put my hands.....When you were a babe.....; and my old arm.....")
 How did Sir Henry answer this same question?
 How did Good answer this question?
 Q. said, "We will stand by you, *but*....."—But What?
 What did Infadoos reply to Ignosi's question about Sir Henry's brother?
50. What was Infadoos' plan?
 What presents were brought from the King?
 Why did Infadoos tell them to wear these things to-night?
51. Why were there paths among the men?
 Why were the men silent?
 What persons were with Twala?
 What did Twala say as he looked round?
52. What did Gagool cry?
 What did the men do when the King raised his spear?
 Describe the witch-finders.—(Faces; waists; hands.)
53. Give the questions and answers of Gagool and the witch-hunters.—(Eyes; ears; smell; clean the land, do justice, you who have.....)
54. Describe what a witch-finder did and how the man was killed?
 Describe Gagool's dance.—(Gather strength; man of wealth; "Try her games on us!"; Umbopa.)
55. For what reason did Q. say that Twala might not kill Umbopa?
56. What did Q. and the other two do when Twala cried "Seize him!"?
 What reason did Twala give for sparing Umbopa?
 What order did Twala give about the dead bodies?
 What did Sir Henry say to Umbopa?

CHAPTER 11

57. How many men came with Infadoos? How many men did each command?

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58. What did the thickly built man say?—(True; my own brother; but much blood; the sun which still shines; great magic; give sign.)
59. What did Good say?
60. Tell how Q. told the chiefs about the sign which he promised to give.
What will happen to the fairest girl at the dance?
61. Where will Infadoos lead Q., Sir Henry and Good after the dance?
What had the girls on their heads? What in their hands?
Tell what Twala and Umbopa said to each other.
62. Describe the Dance.—(Sing; wave flowers; fairy like moonlight; circle; playful battle; beautiful young woman; another.)
What did Twala ask Q.?
What did Twala say when Q. answered?
63. What was the name of the girl?
"Why must I die?" said the girl. What did Gagool answer?—(As a.....It is better tothan to; King's son.)
"What have I done that I should never again....."
Give this beautiful speech as fully as you can.—(Sunrise; stars; flowers; waters; father's hut; mother's kiss; lamb; lover; men-children; cruel.)
64. What did Good do? What did Foulata do then? What did Good say?
"What are you waiting for?" said Sir Henry.
What was Q.'s answer?
65. What happened when Twala said, "Ho! guards, seize this man!"? Tell the scene that followed.
(Then Q. said, "Come but one step nearer and we will....." Gagool said, "....." I gazed up at the moon and saw.....Then I lifted my hand and.....Then Sir Henry followed.....Then Good.....)
- What did the onlookers do?
67. What did Good do?

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67. What did Scragga say and do ?
 What did Sir H. do then ?
 What did the girls do then ?
 Who remained in the courtyard ?

CHAPTER 12

68. What did Good find waiting for him at the hill ?
 What did Infadoos and Ignosi do at sunrise ?
 At what did they all work during the rest of the day ?
 Sir H., Q. and Ignosi went round the camp at night.
 Describe the men lying asleep—(Moonlight, spears, faces ; wind, feathers ; arms ; limbs.)
69. What did Sir H. say as he looked at them ?
 Try to tell as much as you can of the splendid lines which follow this—(To-morrow many thousands stiff and cold, and their place.....Only the old moon.....; and the night wind.....; and the wide earth.....Yet a man dies not while the world.....His name.....but the breath.....; the sound of the words.....)

CHAPTER 13

69. How did Sir H. dress himself ?
 What were Ignosi and his men doing ?
70. Draw a little map and explain Ignosi's plan of battle.
 What will the Greys have to do ?
 Who was with the Greys ?
72. Where was Q. ?
 What did Twala's army do when they saw the Greys ?
 Describe how the Greys met the first attack.—
 (Silent ; roar ; sound of shields ; flashes ; swing ; attackers thinner ; wave over rock.)
73. I was rejoiced to see.....What ?
 Who cheered on the Greys when they were nearly
 "done for" ?

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73. How many of the Greys remained after the second attack?
Where did the Greys go after the second attack?
74. What did Q. ask Ignosi?
What happened as Q. spoke?
Where did Q. find himself after the attack of his company?
Describe how Infadoos behaved during the fight.—
(Calm; orders; laugh; step forward.)
Describe how Sir Henry fought.—(Hair; O-hoy;
shield, and spear, and head; white wizard.)
75. What happened just as Twala and Sir Henry began to fight?
We were left standing there like.....What?
76. How many of the greys remained?
Describe how they came to the gate of Loo and entered—
(Company; greet King; man sent to gate; promise; shouts.)
Where did they find Twala? Who was with him?
What does fate teach most of us who live long enough?
77. What right did Twala claim?
78. Describe the fight between Sir H. and Twala.—
(Sinking sun; Sir H.'s first stroke; Sir H. nearly falls; Sir H.'s shield and shoulder. Blow upon blow; Good recovers from faint; Sir H. wounds Twala; Twala breaks Sir H.'s axe; Q. shuts his eyes; Sir H. seized Twala; struggle on the ground, Sir H. with knife, Twala with axe; Good shouts: Sir H. gets the axe. Twala with knife: but chain-mail; Sir H. strikes; Twala's head. Sir H. falls.)

CHAPTER 14

80. Describe how Foulata nursed Good.—(Little lamp; Good on bed; thin, large eyes; Foulata on ground; weary; pity. "Must die." "Will live." "Will never forget kindness." "My lord for-
gets")

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81. In what three ways did Ignosi show how grateful he was to the Greys?
 For what reason had not Gagool been killed?
 What had Ignosi discovered?—(Cave; dead kings; secret room; white man; woman told King.)
82. "If you touch me, I will slay you with my magic," said Gagool. What did Ignosi answer?
83. What did Gagool cry when Ignosi's spear pricked her?
 Who was the woman who deceived José da Silvestre?
 or.....
 What strange thing did José da Silvestre do in the Treasure-room?
 What persons were in the party?
84. What was the huge hole in the ground?
 Describe the faces of the three Silent Ones.
 What did Foulata take in a basket?
 Where did Gagool wait for them?
85. In what words did Infadoos warn Gagool?
 Why did Foulata go into the cave?
 Describe the cave.—(Size; height; towers; drops of water; needles; nature's slow working.)
87. (a) What did Q. do when he entered the Place of Death?
 (b) What did Sir H. do?
 (c) What did Good do?
 (d) What did Foulata do?
88. Describe the stone figure of Death.—(Height; spear; hand; head; eye-places.)
 What were the figures round the table?
 What was the figure on the table?
89. What was happening to the figure on the table?

CHAPTER 15

90. What did Gagool do on the table?—(Twala; other forms; prayer.)
91. Tell how the door of the Treasure-room opened.
92. Which King was living in the time of José da Silvestre?

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92. (a) What did José da Silvestre take in his hand just as he was leaving ?
 (b) What happened to this thing in the end ?
93. What is the saying about those who enter the Treasure-room ?
 What sign was there that the man who made the Treasure-room fled in haste ?
94. Where did Foulata wait ?
 To what did they come fifteen yards farther on ?
 What did they find just in the doorway ?
 What was in the twelve wooden boxes ?
95. Where were the diamonds stored ?
 Gagool laughed and said, "There are the stones."
 What did she tell them to do to the stones ?
96. What sort of diamonds were in the third chest ?
 Tell about the death of Foulata and the end of Gagool.
97. For what purpose did Foulata ask for Q. ?
 Put Foulata's last speech into your own language (the language of your country). Try to do it nicely : it is a beautiful speech.
 "She is dead," said Good. "You need not let that trouble you," said Sir H. What did he mean ?
98. What words had Gagool said which showed that the plan was in her mind ?
 What was the first thing they did to try to get out ?
 Where did they put the body of Foulata ?
 What did they do with the food ?
99. What did they do after eating ?
 At what time did they enter the cave ? What time was it now ?
 Why was there no hope that Infadoos could help them ?
 Just before the lamp went out, it burned bright for a moment. What did its light show ?

CHAPTER 16

100. Describe how the night passed in the Treasure-room.—(Little sleep ; perfect silence ; snow above ;

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- five feet of rock from Hall of Dead; guns of earth and thunder of heaven; as if already dead; treasures enough for a nation; give all for escape, or for food and water, or for speedy end.)
101. How many matches had they?
 Why did they stop shouting?
 Tell how Q. and Good gave to despair, and how Sir H. treated them.
102. What idea came to Q.?
103. What did Good find?
 Tell how they raised the ring and pulled up the stone.—
 (Good with knife; Good pulls; Q. pulls; Sir H. pulls; Good's handkerchief; all pull; all fall; stair.)
104. What did Q. go back to fetch?
 What did he bring also?
 Q. said, "I say, you fellows, won't you take some? I've filled my pockets." What did Sir H. answer?
 Why did Good make no answer?
105. What did they see at the bottom of the stairs?
 Which way did they go, right or left?
 For what reason did they go this way?
106. Why were they in despair again?
 What sound did Q. hear?
 Tell what happened to Good and how he was saved.—
 (A cry; match; rock; struggle; Sir H.'s hand.)
107. Did they, or did they not, continue to follow the stream? Why?
 What did Sir H. see?
 What came to them after a minute or two?
 What did the path do?
 Of what was the path made?
 Tell how they got out into the open.—(Sir H. out; Good and I; and there above us were....., andon our faces. Then.....and we were all rolling. I caught something.....; Sir H. on level ground; Good.....a tree. Sat on grass; cried; dawn.)

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108. Where were they?

Describe their faces as they were seen in the daylight.

What did they see at the side of the road?

What did one of the men do when he saw them?

109. What did infadoos say?

CHAPTER 17

109. What did Ignosi say about the death of Gagcol?

What did Q. say to Ignosi?—"Servant; King; rule Justly; company of soldiers.")

Ignosi replied, "You stood by me in the battle; why do you leave me now?" What did Q. answer?—"When you....., did not your heart.....? So we.....")

110. Give as well as you can the words in which Ignosi asked them sometimes to look back and remember the great battle.

What did Infadoos tell them as they travelled?

"We had always wondered how.....; but it was now clear to us that....." What had they wondered? What was now clear?

111. What did they reach on the third day?

What did Q. see twenty yards in front of him?

112. What men did they find there?

What did Jim shout to Q.?

113. Tell what had happened to George Curtis.

Tell how George Curtis got food and clothes.

What made their journey across the desert especially difficult?

114. How long did it take them to get back to Durban?

Tell what was in Sir H.'s letter.—Good; new clothes; eye-glass; park; "beautiful white legs"; newspaper; Streeter's; value of diamonds. Come home; good house near Christmas. The axe. Chain-armour.)

115. What does Q. decide to do?

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